THE RED TERROR IN RUSSIA

BY

SERGEY PETROVICH MELGOUNOV

A few of a party of nineteen ecclesiastics shot at Yuriev on January 1, 1918—amongst them Bishop Platon (1)—before their removal to the anatomical theatre at Yuriev University.

[See p. 118.]

TO THE READER

ALTHOUGH, for good and sufficient reasons, the translator who has carefully and conscientiously rendered the bulk of this work into English desires to remain anonymous, certain passages in the work have been translated by myself, and the sheets of the manuscript as a whole entrusted to my hands for revision. Hence, if any shortcomings in the rendering should be discerned (as doubtless they will be), they may be ascribed to my fault alone.

For the rest, I would ask the reader to remember, when passages in the present tense are met with, that most of this work was written during the years 1928 and 1924.

C. J. HOGARTH.

PREFACE

SERGEY PETROVICH MELGOUNOV, author of this work, was born on December 25, 1879. The son of the well-known historian of the name, he is also a direct descendant of the Freemason who became prominent during the reign of Catherine the Great.

Mr. Melgounov graduated in the Historical and Philological Faculty of the University of Moscow, and then proceeded to devote his principal study to the Sectarian movements of Russia, and to write many articles on the subject which, collated into book form, appeared under the title of The Social and Religious Movements of Russia during the Nineteenth Century, and constitute a sequel to two earlier volumes on Sectarian movements during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a young man he took to contributing to the well-known journal the Posledniya Vedomosty (" The Latest News "), and in its columns passionately opposed religious persecution, and subsequently published the articles as a volume entitled Church and State in Russia. The same researches into Sectarianism brought him into contact and association with Tolstoy (whose views, however, he did not share) and Tolstoy's daughter, the Countess Alexandra Lvovna, with whom, at the time of the Bolshevists' seizure of power, he was engaged in preparing for publication a new edition of her father's works designed to include certain compositions not yet published.

Another of Mr. Melgounov's works is a volume entitled

Men and Deeds during the Alexandrian Period, an attempt both to summarise what has been accomplished in the study of that epoch and to consider certain new points in connection with it. Also, it was under Mr. Melgounov's editorship that a group of specialists produced, collectively, The Great Reform of February 19th, 1861 ; The Patriotic War of, and Russian Society in, 1812; The Past and Present Outlook of Freemasonry, and A History Reader of Modern Times—the last a seven-volumed work designed to follow the Reader on similar Unes, but dealing with the Middle Ages, which Sir Paul Vinogradov has edited.

In 1913 Mr. Melgounov joined Mr. V. I. Semevsky, the noted historian of the Russian peasantry as a class, in launching the historical journal Golos Minouvshago (" Voice of the Past "), as a journal for, primarily, study of the history of social movements; and this journal, with certain unavoidable breaks, Mr. Melgounov carried on, after Mr. Semevsky's death in 1916, up to the year 1928. Earlier, in 1911, Mr. Melgounov had suggested, and taken a leading part in, organising a publishing house under the style of " Zadrouga," as a progressive and democratic enterprise intended to act rather as a co-operative society of writers than as a purely commercial venture. And, needless to say, the Bolshevists suppressed it almost at once. Amongst its members were included the writer Korolenko and over six hundred others, whilst its output amounted to several hundreds of works, and it owned, in addition, two printing presses, all the employees of which were members of the society concerned. When the Revolution had come about " Zadrouga" also issued pamphlets by the million, for the enlightenment of the peasantry and the industrial workers. These pamphlets set forth, principally, the views of the Narodnicheskoye Dvizheniyi, or

" People's Movement," as views consonant with those held by Mr. Melgounov himself, since from the first he had been a chief organiser of the party known as " People's Socialists," a party founded by Messrs. Miakotin and Peshekhonov, and basing its ideology upon the common interests of individuals as individual personalities rather than upon class warfare, upon attainment of realities, as occasion should serve, rather than upon Utopian ideas, upon evolution rather than upon political upheavals. And though, during the hectic revolutionary period, when demagogy alone was listened to, the party could attract few fresh adherents to its standard, it had previously, through its untiring defence of the interests of State and People, added to its truly democratic outlook, drawn to itself all that was best in the Russian intelligentsia. As vice-president of the party's central committee, Mr. Melgounov was put forward as the party candidate for the Constituent Assembly, and continued to edit the party's organs, The People's Word and The Popular Socialist, and the organ of the co-operative societies, The Rule of the People, even after the Bolshevists had illegally dispersed that Assembly.

The Revolution of October 1917 failed to deter Mr. Melgounov from remaining on in Russia, as he desired to combat the Bolshevist tyranny, and stood prepared to suffer for his outspokenness under the new regime even as he had suffered under the old. Eight times he was arrested ; twenty-three times did he have his house and documents searched. More than once, however, he was released—thanks to the mediation of such old-established non-Bolshevist revolutionaries as Madame Vera Figner and Prince Kropotkin. In 1920 he and many other literati and public men of Moscow were arrested and tried on a charge of having participated in

the activities of the association known as Vozrozhdeniye or " Regeneration," a political group which, drawn from all democratic parties without distinction, had for its ideal a united National front against the Bolshevists ; and, though sentenced to death, he afterwards had his sentence commuted to ten years imprisonment, and, after serving a year of that sentence (mostly under the system termed " solitary confinement"), was released on the intercession of the Academy of Sciences, but re-arrested in the autumn of 1922, to serve as a witness in the trial of Social Revolutionaries of the Right, and then sentenced to be deported to Perm Province. Lastly, after being allowed to leave Russia on condition that he never returned to his native country, he was, a year later, deprived, in his absence, of civil rights, and had his archives and library confiscated and handed over to the Socialist Academy—this last move on the Bolshevists' part being due to his articles denunciatory of the Red Terror, which he strenuously opposed from the standpoint of ethical rectitude, and as a lifelong protagonist of the deathless principles of justice and freedom.

THE TRANSLATOR.

To save space and labour, the translator has everywhere used the shortened expression " Che-Ka " in place of the full English title "Extraordinary Commission." The expression Che-Ka is formed of the names of the two initial letters of the Russian title, Chrezvychainaya Komissia. Originally there was only one Che-Ka, the "All-Russian Extraordinary Commission," or Vserossiis-Kaya Chrezvychainaya Komissia; but subsequently local and occupational branches came into existence.

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INTRODUCTION

In countries where personal freedom renders honest, sincere political controversy possible . . . the use of political murder as a weapon in the fight is a manifestation of despotism.—The Executive of the Narodnaya Volya, or Party of Popular Freedom.

I WAS in Russia during the first five years of the Bolshevist regime, but contrived to leave that country during the October of 1922. Scarcely had I broken my journey at Warsaw before I found myself confronted with a question involving one of the most complex psychological and socio-ethical problems of our day.

For, as I was sitting in a co-operative cafe run by some Polish ladies, the lady who was serving me with coffee suddenly put to me the question :

" Are you a Russian straight from Russia ? "

" Yes—I am a Russian."

" Then pray tell me how it is that no one there seems willing to assassinate Lenin and Trotsky ? "

The unexpected, the point-blank question took me aback, and the more so because during the past five years I had lost the habit of expressing an opinion openly. But at length I contrived to reply that I myself stood opposed to all terrorist acts, and considered them always to fail in attaining their purpose.

" Yet to think that one man's death might save the lives of thousands who are destined to perish in those ruffians' torture-chambers ! How is it that, though, during Tsarist days, ever so many people were ready to sacrifice their lives for others, even to assassinate, that wrong might be punished, not a soul now will avenge his outraged honour ? Yet every victim has a brother, or a son, or a daughter, or a sister, or a wife. How is it that these will not avenge him ? Oh, I cannot understand it!"

Leaving out of the question the ethical point of the wrong or the right of physical force,[1] I replied that, even though things in Russia had reached the point that human fife had ceased to be of value, it should be remembered by anyone contemplating a terrorist act that revenge, even revenge wreaked out of patriotic motives, would entail thousands of innocent deaths— that though in former days only the political criminal himself, or, at most, he and his associates, had suffered execution, matters now were different, as the past five years had shown.

[1] In the remarkable letter which, in 1906, Sagonov sent to his parents from the Butyrka Prison, where he was lying for the assassination of Plehve, the writer said : "I have committed the most terrible of all acts. I have killed two human beings, and stained my hands with blood. But it was only owing to the horrible struggle and suffering, only owing to our confrontment with the sad realities of life, that I had to take up the sword. . . . And, even so, we were not the first to take it up. . . . Ah, I could not refuse to assume my cross! Try to understand this, and to forgive me. Let people speak of me and my comrades—of those who have been executed, and of those who are still alive;—as my counsel spoke. Said he : ' The bomb which this man threw was not a bomb filled with dynamite, but a bomb charged with the pain and tears of a whole people. By hurling missiles at its rulers, that people hoped at least to dissipate the terrible burden of nightmare from its breast.' "

CHAPTER I

HOSTAGES

Terrorism is needless cruelty practised by terrified men.

—ENGELS.

URITSKY, People's Commissary of the Northern Commune, and a leading spirit of the Che-Ka of Petrograd, was assassinated on August 17, 1918, by a Socialist ex-student named Kannegiesser, who during the war had been a military cadet. In the official report of the assassination it was said :

> Leonid Kannegiesser asserts that he killed Uritsky solely of his own free will, in revenge for the arrest of certain army officers, and for the execution of his friend Peretzweig, but in no case in obedience to orders from any political party or association.

On August 28 another Socialist—in this instance a Madame Kaplau—attempted similarly to assassinate Lenin. And how did the Soviet Government respond to these terrorist acts ? A semi-official communique published in the issue of the Che-Ka's Weekly of October 20 reported that, by a decree of the Che-Ka, 500 hostages had been shot! Nor yet is the true number of these victims known. And probably it never will be known. And the same with regard to the victims' names. Nevertheless, it can at least be asserted that the real figure greatly exceeded the figure given in the semi-official communique, and that the original of the report was never published at all.

On the following March 23 the Rev. B. S. Lombard, a British military chaplain, wrote to Lord Curzon[1] :

In August last two barge-loads of Russian officers were scuttled in the Gulf of Finland, and some of the officers' bodies washed up on the shores of a property belonging to a friend of mine—lashed together with barbed wire in twos and threes.

Will this be deemed an exaggeration ? Yet Moscow and Petrograd still contain numbers of persons who could confirm the facts, whilst another source tells us that as late as the year 1921 the Bolshevists were disposing of their political opponents in the same barbarous manner.

From another eye-witness of events in Petrograd of the period we have the following details :

As regards Petrograd, it is usual to place the number of executions for the year 1918 at 1300. True, the Bolshevists admit to 500 only, but that is because they take care not to include, in the estimate the hundreds of officers and ex-civil servants and private individuals who were shot in Kronstadt and the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul—shot not by actual order of the central authorities, but by order of local Soviets. Kronstadt alone saw 400 shot in a night after being posted before three huge graves dug in the courtyard of the fortress.[2]

Interviewed by a newspaper correspondent at this period, Peters, one of the chiefs of the All-Russian Che-Ka, described the Terror as " a terror simply of hysteria." Then he went on :

" In spite of popular rumour, I am not as bloodthirsty as I am represented to be. All that has happened is that a few over-excitable revolutionaries lost their heads, and showed too much zeal. As regards Petrograd, no shootings

[1] A Collection of Reports on Russian Bolshevism, Abridged Edition. British Parliamentary Paper, "Russia, No. 1," p. 69. [2] The same, pp. 25 and 26.

at all took place before Uritsky's murder, though there have been many since, and sometimes the shooting was indiscriminate ; and as regards Moscow, its only response to the attempt upon Lenin has been the execution of a few ex-monarchical Ministers." " But," added the " merciful " Peters meaningly, " I should like to say that every endeavour on the part of the Russian bourgeoisie to raise its head again will be met with such a rebuff, with such a chastisement, as will throw even the Red Terror into the shade." [1]

For the moment let us pass over the mendacious statement that no cases of capital punishment occurred in Petrograd before Uritsky's assassination, and not comment upon the fact that Moscow shot a whole batch of ex-monarchical Ministers because one solitary Socialist —and a woman at that!—had made an attempt upon Lenin. Not at all did it deter Peters that scarcely a week had elapsed since there had been published, in No. 6 of the Weekly, an abridged list of the persons shot in reprisal for the act. Ten months later a further list (of ninety names) was published,[2] and included ex-Crown Ministers, military officers, co-operative society employees, lawyers, students, and clergy. And even so, we do not really know how many were shot, since nothing further was published. All that we know is that during the same period Moscow, for its part, shot over three hundred persons.[3]

Those of us who were lying in the Butyrka Prison at that terrible time, in the prison into which persons were thrown by the thousand without distinction of social status, will never forget the soul-racking experience. Life there at that period has been aptly described by an eye-witness as " a bacchanalia of

[1] The Outro Moskvy (" Morning Post of Moscow"), No. 21, November 4, 1918.
[2] The number of names originally given was fifteen.
[3] Giving evidence before The Lausanne Tribunal, P. Artibashev estimated the number at 500.

Red madness and terrorism."[1] Especially horrible, especially heart-rending, was the necessity nightly of hearing, and sometimes of seeing, prisoners removed for execution. Every moment motor-cars would arrive to fetch them away. Not a prisoner in the building could sleep. He could only lie and tremble at every blast of a motor-horn. Every now and then some warders would enter a cell, and shout to one or another of its inmates to follow them and " bring your belongings with you." And so they would go to the " Chamber of Souls," to the place where the condemned were to be lashed together with barbed wire before actual execution.[2] The horror of it all! For I myself was a prisoner in the Butyrka, and had to go through that appalling succession of nightmares.

From another eye-witness we have the following:

For the most part I have forgotten the names of those who shared my captivity at the time of the Lenin attempt, and went forth to be shot; but at least are those harrowing pictures still before me—never will they fade from my memory. See that group of five officers, arrested during one of the round-ups which were carried out after the shot at Lenin. Hitherto they have supposed that they would not be put to death, but given merely a term of imprisonment : yet now their summons to the " Chamber of Souls " has arrived, and there is being shouted at them : " Across the yard to the Chamber of Souls—you and your belongings." The officers turn as pale as sheets. Mechanically they fall to collecting their few possessions. Then stay ! One of the five cannot be found—he fails to reply when his name is called ! A warder leaves the room, and returns with the wing superintendent and some Che-Ka officials, and the roll is called again, and the fifth officer is found hiding under a bunk. Dragged thence by the heels, his

[1] See the section " In the Days of the Red Terror," in the compilation known as The Che-Ka.

[2] In Tsarist days this room had been a disinfecting place for newly-arrived convicts.

frenzied cries fill the cell as he struggles to break free, and shouts again and again : " Why should I go ? I do not want to die ! " But he is overpowered ; he is hustled from the ward, and all disappear. When we see them again in the yard outside no sound is coming from the fifth officer, for by this time he has been gagged.[1]

A sub-lieutenant named Semenov was thrown into the Butyrka merely because, whilst watching the flames consume some trucks at the Koursk railway station, he had been heard to remark that, as likely as not, the Bolshevists had fired the trucks themselves in order to cover up their lootings thence. And his father and brother were arrested with him. Three months later he was examined by a " people's prosecutor," and informed that he was going to be set at liberty again. Yet to him, as to so many others, came the summons, " Across the yard, you and your belongings ! " And a few days later, again, his name was figuring on a list of shot. Only when another month had gone by, and the deceased's father was being examined, did the " people's prosecutor " tardily admit that, " owing to the great mass of condemned, your son has been shot in error ! "

Again, once it happened that a lad of about eighteen, who had been arrested during mass seizures carried out near the church of Christ the Saviour in July 1918, was removed from our corridor unexpectedly, and as unexpectedly restored to us again. On his return he told us that, awakened from sleep a few nights after his examination before the Che-Ka, he had been thrust into a motor-car, as though for removal to execution (at that period prisoners still were being shot outside the city—it was only later that they were put to death in the basement of the Butyrka), and driven away.

[1] From the section "The Hungry Guillotine" in The Che-Ka, pp. 49 and 50.

En route, however, the official in charge had happened to remark that his orders for the night were to shoot, not the lad, but a middle-aged man of the same name ; whereupon, on enquiries being made, it had been found that there were two prisoners possessed of the same Christian name and surname, though of different patronymics, and that the man appointed to be shot was aged forty-two, whereas the lad was only eighteen. To what a small accident, therefore, did that lad owe his life!

Also there were thousands of captives over whose heads the Red Terror kept the Damocles' sword so long and so constantly suspended that at last they would even refuse to leave their cells if told that they were going to be released, since the announcement seemed to them merely a trap to induce them to go quietly to execution; whilst in other cases prisoners who had left their cells in the belief that they were going to be set free, and had smilingly received the congratulations of their fellow prisoners, would, a few days later, be figuring amongst the shot, or have been shot without having had their names published at all. Nor were Petrograd and Moscow the only towns where revenge for the Lenin affair was taken by shooting hundreds of victims : the wave of slaughter swept right across Soviet Russia, and submerged cities large and small, villages and hamlets. None the less, the Bolshevist press issued very little information about the provincial executions. The Weekly alone occasionally mentioned shootings under the heading of " The following persons have been shot in reprisal for the Lenin attempt," whilst the organ of the Che-Ka of Nizhny Novgorod, for its part, said :

The criminal assault upon Comrade Lenin, our spiritual leader, forces us, renouncing sentiment, to strengthen our

hands in furthering the proletarian dictatorship. . . . Enough of words! . . . The Commission has shot forty-one persons from the enemy's camp.

And to this statement the journal appended a list including officers, priests, civil servants, a forester, an editor, a watchman, and so forth. And the same day 700 more were seized in Nizhny Novgorod, and held as hostages on the plea (thus stated the Rabochy-Krestiansky Nizhgorodsky Liest, or " Workmen's and. Peasants' Journal of Nizhny Novgorod ") that " every murder, and every attempted murder, of a Communist must be replied to with shootings of hostages selected from amongst the bourgeoisie, now that already we have the blood of killed and wounded crying out for vengeance." And the Che-Ka of the canton of Soumy (Kharkov Province), for its part, ordered " the assassination of Comrade Uritsky, and the attempt upon Comrade Lenin, to be avenged with an application of Red Terror " to 3 airmen ; the Che-Ka of Smolensk to 38 landowners from the Western Area; the Che-Ka of Novorzhev to a family consisting of Alexandra, Natalia, Eudoxia, Paul, and Michael Rosliakov; the Che-Ka of Poshekon to 31 persons, including 5 belonging to a family named Shalaev, and 4 to a family named Volkov; the Che-Ka of Pskov to 31 persons ; the Che-Ka of Yaroslavl to 38 ; the Che-Ka of Archangel to 9 ; the Che-Ka of Seboshsk to 17 ; the Che-Ka of Vologda to 14 ; and the Che-Ka of Briansk to 9 (who, however, are described as " burglars"). And with these reprisals ordered by the All-Russian Che-Ka for the attempt upon " the leader of the world's proletariat " went executions of a Bolshevist commissary for purloining 400,000 roubles ; of 2 sailors for a like offence ; of a commissary for " attempting to sell a revolver to a militiaman " ; of 2 counterfeiters ; and

of others, with the names published in the third issue of the Che-Ka's Weekly. In fact, dozens of similar lists could be cited, as well as lists which never saw the light, for there was not a single locality where shootings " because of Lenin" failed to be carried out.

A good example of a " Lenin attempt " press utterance is that of a sheet which, issued by the Che-Ka of Morshansk " to combat counter-revolutionary activity," said, amongst other comments on current events :

Comrades, one of our cheeks has received a blow. To that blow let us respond with a hundred blows delivered upon the enemy's face in its every feature. The Che-Ka already has ordained that preventive inoculation with Red Terror be applied. Let that inoculation be administered to the country in general, but especially to our town of Morshansk, so that the murder of Comrade Uritsky, and the attempted murder of Comrade Lenin, may be avenged with shootings of . . . [and four names follow]. And if any further attempt be made upon the life of a revolutionary leader or a responsible worker, let cruelty be resorted to, and continued, so that each blow from the enemy may be countered with a blow ten times as forcible.

This, so far as I know, is the first official allusion to hostages, to the system of local settings aside of citizens " to be shot in case of further manifestations of counter revolutionary activity." In like manner did the Che-Ka of Torzhok announce to " the inhabitants of our town and district" that "for the head and life of any leader of ours hundreds of heads of the bourgeois, both of principals and of dependants, must fall." And then the Che-Ka appended a list of proposed hostages which included engineers, merchants, a priest, and a batch of Social Revolutionaries of the Right—in all, twenty persons. And at Ivanovo-Vosnessensk 184 persons were seized to be held as hostages, whilst Perm's

vengeance for Uritsky and Lenin was the shooting of 50 hostages.[1]

These facts at least refute the official statements which I have quoted, for they prove that the Uritsky and Lenin affairs brought to their deaths several thousands of people who could not possibly have had any connection with those two tragedies, but nevertheless had been seized as hostages. And as regards what happened to other hostages, a typical example is seen in the case of General Roussky after that, with Radko and Dmitriev and others to the number of 32, he had been thrown into confinement at Essentouky, and, to quote the official communique, " informed, by order of Comrade Petrovsky, People's Commissary of the Interior, that he and his companions will be executed out of hand if the slightest attempt at a counterrevolutionary rising, or the slightest attempt upon the life of a proletarian leader, be made." [2] Hostages were seized also in Kislovodsk (33) and elsewhere, whilst at one time the number of hostages lying in the Piatigorsk concentration camp amounted to 160. And at Piatigorsk the following took place. On October 13, 1918, the chief commissary of the Che-Ka, one Sorokin, conceived the idea of bringing about a rising " to emancipate the Soviet Power from the Jews "; wherefore he arrested and executed members even of his own Che-Ka, and then, to vindicate his action, produced documents purporting to prove that the executed officials had been " holding communication with the White Army." Unfortunately, evidence subsequently furnished to Denikin's Commission showed that Sorokin's real intention had been previously to safeguard himself

[1] See the Severnaya Communa ("Northern Commune") of Sep-tember 18, 1918.
[2] See the Izvestia of Moscow : also the Severny Kavkaz (" Northern Caucasus "), No. 138.

by obtaining from a local " extraordinary congress of deputies of the soviet of Piatigorsk, and of revolutionary representatives, and of Red soldiers," which he convened to meet him at Nevinomiskaya Stanitza an acknowledgment that he had acted rightly, and with proper authority, but that before he had been able to present himself to his congress his enemies had branded him with " outlawry " and " treason to the Revolution," arrested him, and executed him out of hand.[1] But one result of Sorokin's fate was to seal the fate also of the majority of the hostages who had been thrown into the local concentration camp, and in No. 157 of the local Izvestia we find published a decree (signed by Artabekov, chief of the local Che-Ka) saying :

Inasmuch as on October 21 the lives of certain proletariat leaders in this town of Piatigorsk were taken, we do comply both with Order No. 3, of date of October 8 of this year, and with our decree already passed, by commanding that the following hostages and members of counter-revolutionary organisations be shot in retaliation for those diabolical assassinations of esteemed members of our Central Executive Committee.

And to the decree there was attached a list of 59 names, including those of General Roussky, an ex-Senator, a financier, a priest, and others. And the statement that later these men were " shot " is a lie, for the truth is that they were hacked to pieces with swords,[2] and their goods converted into " communal property."

Everywhere the same system of hostages flourished. A trustworthy witness has stated that when a certain P., a student, killed a commissary in Chernigov Province, P.'s father, mother, and two brothers (the younger

[1] See the materials collected by the Denikin Commission.
[2] The almost incredible horrors of this massacre are described on a later page.

one a boy of fifteen) were executed at once, with the family's German governess and her niece of eighteen, though it was only later that P. himself was found and arrested.

Indeed, that year the Terror assumed such ghastly dimensions as to throw into the shade any similar phenomenon known to history. During the year, also, a group of Anarchists and Left Social Revolutionaries who at first had supported the Bolshevists, and helped them to organise Che-Kas, revenged the deaths of certain comrades of theirs whom the Bolshevists had executed as hostages by committing a terrorist act on their own account. The affair began by Latzis, head of the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka, issuing, on June 15, 1919, the following statement:

Inasmuch as certain members of the Left Social Revolutionary (Internationalist or Activist) Group have been sending threatening letters to leading soviet workers, and menacing them with a White Terror, we, the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka, do herewith declare that if, in the future, even the slightest molestation of soviet workers should be attempted, every Social Revolutionary Activist who may now be in prison, both here and in Great Russia, will be shot, and the chastening hand of the proletariat made to fall as heavily upon the White Guard with his commission from Denikin as upon the Activist Social Revolutionary who chooses to call himself an "Internationalist." [1]

The Anarchists' retort to this statement was a prearranged explosion in the Central Che-Ka's very building —the building (which stood in the Leontievsky Pere-oulok) being partially demolished, and more than one

[1] Still earlier than this, namely, on the previous March 1, Dzherzhinsky had written in the Kievan edition of the Izvestia : "It would be well if all Social Revolutionaries now in custody were converted into hostages, and made to serve as guarantees for the good behaviour of their respective wings of the Social Revolutionary Party."

leading Communist who happened to be within it at the time either killed or wounded. In turn, the Muscovite official press published, on the following day, a notice signed by Kamenev. Said the notice:

Truly shall the White Guards who perpetrated this outrage be subjected to the most terrible of penalties !

And a further notice in the Izvestia added :

The Government will fittingly avenge the deaths of our murdered ones.

Whence another wave of bloody terrorism swept over Russia as the Government " fittingly " avenged itself upon people who could not by any possible means have had anything to do with the explosion, and accomplished that end through the simple course of shooting anyone and everyone who happened then to be in prison, even though Anarchists alone (as their party subsequently acknowledged in the pamphlet published in Berlin in 1922) had committed the terrible act. And in Saratov also the same Muscovite throwing of a bomb was avenged by shootings of twenty-eight persons, from members of the Constitutional Democratic Party and ex-candidates for the Constituents Assembly to an ex-member of the Narodnaya Volya Group and a number of agriculturists and priests.[1] Or such, at all events, was the official figure given. As a matter of fact, the number of persons shot was the number needed to bring Saratov's quota of the contribution to the " All-Russian blood-tax "up to the total of sixty specified by Moscow's previously despatched telegram. And from an ex-inmate of the Butyrka Prison we receive still further light upon Moscow's methods (for by now that city had become the centre of government, in place of

[1] See the Izvestia of Saratov, October 2, 1919.

petrograd) of compiling its death lists. Says this ex-inmate[1] :

> Zacharov, Commandant of the Che-Ka of Moscow, has deposed that when Dzherzhinsky returned from the scene of the explosion he was extremely pale and excited, and ordered forthwith that all cadets and gendarmes and representatives of the old regime and counts and princes in custody at the time, both in Moscow and in the local concentration camps, should be shot in the order in which they stood on the registers of detention.

Whence, merely the verbal command of an individual gave the signal for innocent deaths by the thousand ! The exact number of victims hurriedly shot that night, and on the morrow, is not yet known. All that can be said is that even the most moderate official estimate placed the number at hundreds, and that not until the following evening was the order rescinded.

When another year had passed the central authorities officially instituted the system of seizure of hostages, for on November 30, 1920, it proclaimed that "inasmuch as certain White Guard organisations have decided to perpetuate terrorist acts against leaders of our Workers and Peasants' Revolution," every representative of the non-Communist parties then in custody was to be seized and segregated. And such was the tenour of this decree that the aged Anarchist, Prince Peter Kropotkin, felt bound to protest against it, and write [2] :

> Have you not a single member sufficiently honest to remind his comrades that such measures constitute a return to the worst periods of the Middle Ages and the religious wars, and demean a people undertaking to construct a new order of society, and to conduct that order on Communist

[1] In the section " A Year in the Butyrka Prison " in The Che-Ka, P. 144.

2 He did so in No. 3 of the author's Berlin-published (Russian) review, Na Chouzhoi Storonye (" In Foreign Parts ").

principles ? For we have come to the pass that a man may be imprisoned, not in punishment for any definite crime, but merely that you may be able to hold over your political opponents the threat of his death. " Kill one of our side, and we will kill so many of yours." Is not that as though each morning you were to take a man to the scaffold, and then to take him back to prison again and say " Wait . . . Not to-day " ? Do you not realise that such things are a throwback to the system of torture, and to a system which tortures not only the prisoner but also his relatives ?

Kropotkin, however, was already old, infirm, remote from life. He did not live to behold the full enormity of the Bolshevists' manner of expression of physical force. Hostages ? Why, they were seized and held from the Terror's very earliest days, and especially during the civil war period—north, south, and east. Particularly with regard to the large number of them held in Kharkov did Kovy, head of the local provincial Che-Ka, write : " The bourgeois viper will need but to raise its head for hostages' heads to fall."[1] And fall those hostages' heads did. In Elizabetgrad, in 1921, thirty-six were executed because of the assassination of a single official of the local Che-Ka. We have confirmation of the fact (which was first made known through the instrumentality of Bourtsev's journal, Obstchoye" Dielo, " The Common Cause"[2]) from analogous items cited later in this work. In short, the saying " Blood for blood " received wide practical application, and as early as on November 10, 1918, we find Mr. H. B. Lockhart, British Consul in Moscow, writing to Sir George Clarke[3]:

The Bolshevists have established the odious practice of hostage-seizure. Nay, worse : they have taken to striking at their political opponents through those opponents' womenkind. Recently a long list of hostages-designate

[1] The Izvestia of Khakov, No. 126, May 13, 1919.
[2] In No. 345 of that journal.
[3] See British Parliamentary Paper, " Russia, No. 1 (1919)," p. 15.

was published in Petrograd, and when the Bolshevists could not find them all they seized the wives of those missing, and kept them in prison until their husbands gave themselves up.

Yes, women and even children were arrested. Sometimes, also, they were shot. For example, Red Cross workers in Kiev have told us that a group of ladies seized in place of some officers who had been forcibly impressed into the Red Army, and escaped thence and joined the White forces, were put to death in their husbands' stead, whilst in addition we know that in March, 1919, the relatives of all the officers of the 86th Infantry Regiment were shot when that corps went over to the Whites,[1] and that in a memorandum addressed to the All-Russian Executive Committee by Madame U. Zoubevich, a well-known Social Revolutionary of the Left, that lady said of certain executions of hostages in Kronstadt during 1919, that the officers in whose stead those hostages had been shot had merely been suspected of designing to transfer their allegiance to the Whites.[2]

Another plan, and an easy one enough, was to transfer hostages from their category as such to the category of " counter-revolutionaries." Witness this extract from The Communist [3]:

On August 13 the military-revolutionary tribunal of the 14th Army considered the case of the ten citizens of Alexandria who had been made hostages, and declared them to be hostages no longer, but, instead, counter-revolutionaries, and decreed their execution.

And the sentence was carried out on the following day.

[1] See the Rousskaya Zhizn (" Russian Life "), of March 11.
[2] Asa result of this disconcerting statement, Madame Zoubevich was exiled to Orenburg.
[3] The organ of the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka. See its No. 134 of the year 1918.

During the peasant risings in the Tambov area peasant women and children were made hostages by the hundred at a time, and sometimes forced to spend upwards of two years in prison in Moscow, Petrograd, and elsewhere ; whilst on September 1, 1920, " acting headquarters " prescribed that rebel peasant families should " have applied to them ruthless Red terrorism, and all persons over the age of eighteen, regardless of sex, be arrested, so that if the bandits continue their activities the same may be executed."

Likewise, from villages " special contributions " were exacted, with confiscation of lands and other property to follow in case of non-compliance with the demand.[1] The precise manner of official fulfilment of these instructions we learn from one and another official communique published in the Izvestia of Tambov, where that journal says " On September 5 five villages were burnt to the ground," " On September 7 over two hundred and fifty peasants were shot," and so forth, and so forth. We learn, too, that during the years 1921 and 1922 the Kozhoukov concentration camp near Moscow had thrown into it as many as 313 peasant hostages, and that, though these hostages included children between the ages of sixteen and a month, and typhus raged throughout the autumn of 1921, the half-starved, half-naked captives were allowed no winter clothing. Lastly, in an issue of the Krasny Voin ("The Red Soldier") of November 12, 1919, we find long lists of hostages seized for deserters from the Red Army. They constitute the first instance of the category known as " conditionally condemned."

Parents were shot with their children—the facts stand officially certified, registered. Children were

[1] See the journal Revolutsionnaya Rossia ("Revolutionary Russia"), Nos. 14 and 15.

shot in their parents' presence. Parents were shot in the presence of their children. And the Special Branch of the All-Russian Che-Ka, under a maniac named Kedrov,[1] did especially bloodthirsty work in this way as from his station " at the front " he either sent to the Butyrka Prison or shot on the spot batches of " young spies"—in other words, children between the ages of eight and fourteen. I myself had many such cases come to my knowledge whilst I was still in Moscow.

As for the spiritual tortures which Peter Kropotkin vainly denounced, they were practised both by provincial and metropolitan Che-Kas in addition to the usual physical cruelty. For Peter Kropotkin's voice had been but " the voice of one crying in the wilderness," and in any locality where executions of hostages failed to occur for a while, the failure meant merely that that particular district had not recently witnessed a political assassination.

So another year passed, until the Kronstadt rising saw fresh hostages seized by the thousand, and detained in the new category, even as were the Social Revolutionaries condemned to death at the famous trial of that party—all of these were kept (and were being kept until at all events quite recently) under a permanent and indefinite threat of conditional execution.

The only possible explanation of why the assassination of Vorovsky was not followed by mass shootings (or, more correctly, by publications of official information of mass shootings) is that the assassination occurred on Swiss soil, and attained wide publicity. As a matter of fact, what happens in the secret places of the executive organ with which the All-Russian Che-Ka has now become replaced, is never really known. Yet we do know that as soon as ever Vorovsky's assassins had

[1] I have heard that this man is now in a lunatic asylum.

been acquitted all Russia became threatened with renewals of terrorism towards hostages, and the German journals Dni and Vorwaerts of the day stated that Stalin had informed his Che-Ka of Moscow that

The labouring masses of the country are calling unanimously for punishment of those who prompted the monstrous Vorovsky crime, [whilst adding that] Vorovsky's real murderers were not Polunin and Konradi, despicable though those hirelings were, but the Socialist traitors who since have fled the people's wrath to spots where it cannot reach them, but where they may prepare fresh aggressive acts against the leaders of our proletariat, in complete forgetful-ness of the magnanimity shown them in 1922, when we thwarted the popular desire, and suspended the decree which the Supreme Tribunal had pronounced against traitors. Yet let those persons bear in mind that the decree still remains in force, and that, if necessary, we can fix the responsibility for Comrade Vorovsky's death upon friends of those persons still at our disposal.[1]

" Hostages are capital of exchange," once remarked the notorious Latzis. But the meaning of the term " hostage," as applied to foreign subjects captured during a military campaign abroad, bears no relation to Russian subjects seized in Russia ; the latter resource was purely a form of mental intimidation which summed up in itself the whole basis of the Bolshevists' internal policy and governmental system.

And how remarkable that we should see the Bolshevists vainly attempting to carry out a policy which reactionary circles found to be impossible as long ago as the year 1881 ! A propos of that policy, V. N. Chaikovsky once wrote:

There could be no more forcible expression of brutality— to be more exact, no more wanton destruction of the foundations upon which human society stands reared—than

[1] Only recently the Che-Ka of Georgia seized a large number of Menshevist (Social Democrat) hostages.

seizure of civilian hostages. To be able to accept the legalisation of such an institution one needs first to slough every one of the social values which have been developed through the centuries, to agree to bow the knee to the demons of war and wickedness and destruction, and to disregard all the painful struggles towards a sure foundation of social right in which humanity has for ages past been engaged.

Similarly, the appeal issued by the " Union of Russian Publicists and Journalists Resident in Paris " in 1921 stated:

There should be no punishment where there has been no crime; and whatsoever the passions involved in the political struggle now proceeding between Russian parties, there is enshrined in these words the first and foremost verity of civilisation. Always should that be borne in mind. . . . We protest against the slaughtering of innocent persons. We protest against the torturing of them through the agency of fear. We know what heartbreaking days and nights are being spent by Russian fathers and mothers deprived of their children. We know what men and women hostages are feeling as perforce they lie awaiting death for acts which they have never committed. We say that for such cruelty as this no justification exists. We say that the mere fact that such barbarism could find a lodging in a civilised community constitutes an outrage.

But who heeds it ? An outrage—yes.

CHAPTER II

" THE TERROR WAS FORCED UPON US "

Usage of force in all its forms, from executions downwards, is the only method which can enable the proletariat to evolve Communistic Man from the human material of the present Capitalistic epoch.—BUKHARIN.

BOLSHEVIST spokesmen frequently declare that the Terror was the outcome of " popular indignation against counter-revolution," and that only because of pressure exercised upon it by the working-classes did the Bolshevist Party resort to terrorist measures. Still more frequently do they assert that at least did terrorism, when assumed as a weapon by the State, " legalise and normalise " popular activities which otherwise were taking the law into their own hands.

A more pharisaical attitude it is not easy to conceive. But at least it is easy to bring forward facts illustrative of the gulf between it and the truth.

On February 17, 1922, Dzherzhinsky, " People's Commissary of the Interior," and the real creator and director of the Red Terror, said in a memorandum addressed to the Council of People's Commissaries :

Throughout, my object has been to systematise a Revolutionary Government poorly equipped with punitive apparatus. From the first I saw that the centuries-old hatred of the proletariat for its oppressors might express itself in senseless, sanguinary episodes which would arouse such elements of popular fury as would sweep away friends as well as foes, useful and vital sections of society as well as

sections hostile and noxious to us. Hence, from the first the Che-Ka has been seeking but to impart wise direction to the chastening hand of the revolutionary proletariat.

Well, let me demonstrate the true character of Dzherzhinsky's " wise direction " or " systematisation " of a State poorly provided with punitive apparatus. As early as by December 7, 1917, his organisation of an All/Russian Che-Ka based upon " historical research into past epochs " stood worked out, and had been made to agree with Bolshevist-deduced theories. And during the previous spring Lenin had remarked that it would be quite easy to carry out a social revolution in Russia, since all that would be necessary would be to exterminate two or three hundred of the bourgeoisie. And we know Trotsky's reply to Kautsky's Terrorism and Communism wherein he, Trotsky, proffered a metaphysical justification of terrorism which can be reduced to the formula: " The enemy needs to be rendered harmless. And in time of war that means that the enemy needs to be destroyed. To which end the most potent weapon is terrorism. To deny its power is to be a dissimulating hypocrite." Naturally, Kautsky was at least entitled to retort that Trotsky's book had better have been entitled " A Hymn of Praise to Inhumanity." " For," added Kautsky, " bloodthirsty appeals are worthy only of the worst and lowest phases of revolution."

Also, the Bolshevists so far flout facts as to maintain that they resorted to terrorism only because early attempts had been made upon the lives of " proletarian leaders," and in 1918, when brazenly extolling the Soviet Government's " exceptional humanity," Latzis, a Lett, and a particularly ruthless member of the Che-Ka, declared that" though thousands of our people have been murdered, we have never gone beyond making

arrests "; whilst Peters impudently asserted, as we have seen, that up to the time of Uritsky's assassination not a single case of capital punishment had occurred in Petrograd.

Well, even if we grant that the Bolshevists did begin their rule by abolishing (for propaganda purposes, of course) the capital penalty, it was not long before that penalty came into its own again.[1] For as early as January 8, 1918, we find the Soviet of People's Commissaries issuing an Order that battalions " for trench digging " should be formed, and be composed of men and women members of the bourgeoisie, and officered by Red Guards. And, added the Soviet, " Any man or woman of the bourgeois class who shall resist this Order shall be shot, even as ... all counter-revolutionary agitators are to be shot."

Hence, for all intents and purposes, summary capital punishment, execution without trial or inquiry, became reinstated.

A month later (for the Che-Ka needed to win its spurs) a second Order notified that " all counterrevolutionary agitators, persons fleeing to the Don country, and persons joining the Counter-Revolutionary Army shall be shot without mercy by detachments empowered by the Che-Ka." And in time so broadcast did these threats come to be that they flowed like water from the cornucopia of a fountain. " Sackmen (?) resisting shall be shot" ; " Persons posting up unauthorised proclamations shall be shot." There was no end to them.[2]

Once the Council of People's Commissaries sent the following urgent telegram along a line of railway—

[1] A notice to that effect was published in No. 7 of the Gazeta Vremen-nago Rabochago i Krestianskago Pravitelstva (" Gazette of the Workers' and Peasants' Temporary Government ").

[2] The Izvestia, No. 27.

a telegram relating to a special train which at the moment was en route from Stavka to Petrograd : " If the train which is now proceeding towards Petersburg shall experience the smallest delay, the person or persons responsible for that delay shall be executed out of hand." And another notice said :

Any person found attempting to evade the heretofore laws of the country concerning sales or purchases or acts of barter, or the laws promulgated to the same end by the Soviet Power, shall be punished with sequestration of property and shooting.

Hence Bolshevist threats of capital punishment were as many as they were varied. Nor, be it remarked, was the right of pronouncing death sentences confined to the central authorities alone, for local revolutionary committees also could—or at all events did—pronounce them, and in Kalouga Province we encounter a notice of the coming execution of a well-to-do citizen for having failed to furnish his contribution to a monetary levy ; in Viatka, a case of a man being executed for " leaving his home after eight o'clock at night " ; and, in Rybinsk, a case of a man being executed for " having, with others, assembled in a public street "—not even a warning seeming to have been thought necessary. Nor did threats of death involve shooting alone, for we read that the Bolshevist committee of the town of Loniev intimated, after fixing the rate of contribution to be paid by its local citizens, that anyone who should refuse to pay it " will be drowned in the Dniester with a stone about his neck."

And still more brutally did Krylenko, the Bolshevists' Commander-in-Chief, and subsequently Chief Government Advocate before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal (and therefore the man who of all others should have upheld law and order in Soviet Russia)—still more

brutally did this Krylenko announce on January 22 : " I would suggest that the peasantry of Mohilev Province be left to deal with their oppressors as they may think fit." Lastly, we find the Chief Commissary of the Northern Region and Western Siberia proclaiming in a certain instance that, " unless the offenders be handed over, every tenth person, regardless of guilt or of innocence, shall be shot."

Such were some of the orders, decrees, and announcements issued by the Soviet Government on the subject of the capital penalty! They mean that as early as 1918 capital punishment became re-established on a scale which even the Tsarist rigime had never beheld, as a first result of Dzherzhinsky's " wise direction " of "a Revolutionary Government's punitive apparatus," and of the Government's showing the way in disregarding human rights and morality by issuing a manifesto which proclaimed, on February 21, 1918, when the German forces were advancing, that " the (Soviet) Fatherland is in danger, and therefore from now onwards the death penalty shall be applied to all enemy agents, spies, looters, profiteers, hooligans, and counter-revolutionary agents."

But the most revolting incident of all was the trial of Captain Stchasny before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal in May, 1918. Earlier he had been the means of saving the remnant of the Russian Baltic Fleet from surrender to the German Squadron, and bringing it safely back to Kronstadt; yet no sooner had he done so than he was arraigned for " treason " : the indictment against him said : "Although he has accomplished what would seem to have been a heroic deed, his object was none other than that he might thereby earn popularity for subsequent use against the Soviet Government ! " Trotsky acted as chief, in fact, sole, witness

for the prosecution, and the end was that on May 22 Stchasny was shot for having saved his country's warships in the Baltic! At a stroke, also, the verdict created for the Bolshevists the precedent for award of the death sentence by a legal tribunal which they were needing. And thenceforth it was not in isolated cases that capital punishment began to occur, whether in pursuance of a legal verdict, or in execution of an " administrative order " (the Che-Ka's ad hoc judicial weapon up to the September of 1918, the date of the Red Terror's official proclamation), for we can now begin to count cases of capital punishment awarded by formal sentence by the score and by the hundred. To which there should be added both the executions consequent upon quellings of peasant risings, and the results of military firings upon street demonstrations, and those many governmental irregularities of which the slaughter of officers in Finland and the Crimea during the October of 1917, and the shootings of thousands of persons in localities where civil war broke out, and the Che-Ka's orders and decrees could be implemented in full, are examples.

In 1919, however, Latzis, statistician to the Government, did furnish some official totals of executions, and they appeared in a series of articles in the Kievan and Muscovite editions of the Izvestia before being re-issued in book form under the title of Two Years' Fighting on the Home Front. The articles stated that during the first half of 1918 (which constituted the first six months of the Che-Ka's existence) the number of persons shot in Soviet Russia (which as yet included only the old twenty provinces of the centre) amounted to "22," and that similar moderation would have continued to be observed if the country had not " become swept with a wave of conspiracies," and if " the

counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie had not resorted to a White Terror." [1] A statement of the kind could have been made only in a land whence all normal sources of social information for the statement's contradiction had been swept away. But it happened that at that period (1918) I too was making shift to keep a record of executions: and though usually I could avail myself of figures published by the Bolshevists themselves, this applied, for the most part, to the centre of the country alone, and only in a slighter degree to the provinces, where my sole resource was (1) returns published at irregular and uncertain intervals in one or another local journal, and (2) such information from other sources as stood subject to subsequent verification. Yet even these casual data provided me with a card-index library of 884 items. Hence I am as well aware as was Latzis himself that, though the All-Russian Che-Ka was not officially established until December 7, Che-Ka activity began long before that date, since at the taking of the Winter Palace the Bolshevists had thrown Prince Toumanov, ex-Assistant Minister of War, into the Neva, and on the day after the fall of Gatchina Mouraviev had issued an official order for the lynching of recalcitrant Tsarist officers, and the Bolshevists had brought about Douk-honin's and Shingarev's and Kokoshkin's deaths, and Lenin had caused two student brothers named Ganglez (?) to be shot for the crime of being found to be wearing epaulets on their shoulders, and frequently the Military-Revolutionary Tribunal (the forerunner of the All-Russian Che-Ka) had made use of "extraordinary decrees" for the extermination of its opponents.

So who shall credit Latzis' statement that " those executed up to the middle of 1918 belonged mostly

[1] The Kievan Izvestia of May 17, 1919.

to the criminal underworld," or his further statement that they numbered only " 22 " ?

Besides, the Latzian statistics overlooked statements made by the Che-Ka itself: they overlooked the fact that already the Che-Ka's own organ, the Weekly, had admitted that the Che-Ka of the Urals alone had shot 35 persons during the period above specified. Besides, were his statements meant to convey the impression that no executions at all had taken place during the second half of the year named ? For, if so, how are we to reconcile such forbearance of slaughter with an interview which, on June 8, 1918, the two chiefs of the All-Russian Che-Ka, Dzherzhinsky and Zachs, accorded to a representative of Gorky's journal Novaya Zhizn ? [1] For during that interview the two chiefs informed the journalist that "mercy towards our enemies does not come within our purview," and spoke of executions as " carried out by unanimous decree of our Che-Ka Committee."

At; all events we know that on August 28, 1918, the Muscovite Izvestia issued official intimation that 43 persons had been shot in six provincial towns, and that inasmuch as, in October of the same year, Bokia, Uritsky's successor on the Che-Ka of Petrograd, reported at a conference of Che-Kas of the Northern Commune that up to the previous March 12, when the seat of the All-Russian Che-Ka had been transferred from Petrograd to Moscow, 800 persons had been arrested, and the number of hostages estimated to be alive during September had amounted only to 500, at least 300 must have been shot between March and September.[2]

Moreover, are we to discredit an entry in Margoulies' diary which says : " I have just been told by Peters

[1] " The New Life " [2] The Weekly, No. 6.

(Secretary to the Danish Legation) that Uritsky goes about boasting of having signed twenty-three death warrants in a day " ? [1] And Uritsky, be it remembered, was one of those who affected to be "regularising" the Terror !

At least it may be said with safety that the only difference between the first half and the second half of 1918 lay in the fact that during the second half propaganda on behalf of a Red Terror became open and universal propaganda, and that immediately upon the attempt upon Lenin's life the Terror was announced urbi et orbi. Yet at a meeting of " workers' Soviets " held as late as December 7, 1918, Lounacharsky had the hypocrisy to say: " We do not wish for a Red Terror, but are as opposed as ever to capital punishment, to the scaffold." To public capital punishment, to the public scaffold, yes: but not to slaughter in hidden torture-chambers. Radek alone seems to have thought that there was no sense in concealing his predilection for public, rather than for secret, executions, for he wrote in an article entitled " The Red Terror " [2] :

When we shot five bourgeois hostages in accordance with a plenary decree of the local soviet, the execution of these men in the presence of, and with the approval of, several thousands of workers instilled mass intimidation more effectively than could have been accomplished even by five hundred executions carried out apart from working-class participation.

Nor could the Commissary of Justice's[3] one-time insistence upon the " magnanimity " which he declared to be inspiring Bolshevist tribunals save him from having later to admit that " the period between March, 1918 and the end of August was a veritable (though unofficial) reign of terror."

[1] See Margoulies' work, A Year of Intervention, vol. ii., p. 77.
[2] Published in No. 192 of the Izvestia, 1918.
[3] The Commissary of Justice at the time was Steinberg.

So sanguinary, such an orgy of slaughter, did that reign become as at first even to disgust more than one convinced Communist. And the first protestant of the kind was the sailor Dybenko who later achieved " fame " in connection with the Stchasny affair. On July 31 he sent to the journal Anarchism a letter as follows :

Does there not exist a Communist honest enough vocally to protest against this re-establishment of capital punishment ? Or are all of you cowards, and afraid to lift your voices ? However, if even a single honest Communist does exist, let him now do his duty by denouncing the extreme punitive measure before the world's proletariat. More. Seeing that we are not to blame for this scandalous restoration of the death penalty, let us express our disgust by leaving the ruling party, and raising such an outcry as shall force our Communist authorities themselves to lead us, and all other opponents of the death penalty, to the scaffold, and there themselves act as our executioners.

However, it is only fair to state that eventually Dybenko got over what Lounacharsky called his " sentimentality " ; for three years later, after the failure of the Kronstadt rising, he is seen taking an active part in the slaughter of his comrades there. " There must be no shilly-shallying with the villains." During the first day alone of the shootings 300 " villains " were executed.

Other voices too were raised in protest, but soon fell as silent as Dybenko's, and left the perpetrators of the Terror free to continue their course of action unchecked—a course as impossible of moral as of metaphysical justification.

The only Bolshevist hardy enough really to oppose inclusion of capital punishment in the criminal code which the Bolshevists evolved in 1922 was Riazanov. Incidentally, he had, at the time of the Lenin attempt, visited the Butyrka Prison, and told the Socialists confined there that " I and the other leaders of the

proletariat are experiencing great difficulty in controlling our followers, since the recent assault upon Lenin has rendered them eager to break into the Prison, and wreak popular vengeance upon you Socialist traitors." And Dzherzhinsky told me the same thing when I was brought before him in September. And so did other Communists. As for the string pullers in Petrograd, they worked for the desired impression by causing the local press to publish references to certain " demands for terrorism which are reaching us from political groups." But the end was that excessive use of the one stage effect deceived nobody : rather, it came to be looked upon as a stereotyped propagandist detail of the demagogy by which Bolshevism had been created and was being upheld.

However, as though to the swing of a conductor's baton, identical sets of spurious and belated resolutions (" belated " because the Red Terror had long been openly proclaimed) continued to be passed at meetings, and suitable battle cries to be given out at the meetings, and on wall posters, and in the press.[1] All that was necessary was that the original resolutions should be passed, and caused everywhere to be locally repeated, and then have suitable catch phrases for slaughter evolved for them—such catch phrases as " Death to the capitalists ! " and " Death to the bourgeoisie! " But at Uritsky's funeral the catch phrases increased in pungency. "A thousand lives for the life of each leader!" was largely used there, and so were " A bullet for every workers' foe ! " and " Death to all hirelings of Anglo-French capital! " Moreover, from every page of every Bolshevist journal

[1] 'Meetings in support of a Red Terror were largely held in Moscow, and addressed by Kamenev, Bukharin, Sverdlov, Lounacharsky, and Krylenko.

there began to arise the reek of blood-thirst. Cried the Petrograd Krasnaya Gazeta, the " Red Gazette," of August 81, d propos of Uritsky's assassination :

Our enemies must pay in thousands for the hero's death, and namby-pambyism come to an end, and the bourgeoisie be taught a bloody lesson by having its surviving members treated with terrorism until " Death to the bourgeoisie! " becomes our regular pass-word.

And on the Lenin attempt being made, the journal fairly shrieked. Its words were :

Let our enemies be killed by the hundred ! Nay, those hundreds must be made thousands ! Let the rascals be drowned in their own blood ! Only rivers of their blood can atone for the blood of Lenin and of Uritsky ! Blood ! Blood ! As much blood as possible !

And the Izvestia, for its part, screamed : " The proletariat must respond to Lenin's wound in a way that shall make the bourgeoisie shrink and tremble ! " And in an article which Radek, the Bolshevists' star pressman, contributed to the Izvestia, a propos of a current symposium on Red terrorism, he cried :

If a Red Terror ensues, its primary cause will have been the White terrorism exercised by our foes. For whereas punishment of individual bourgeois who have never really taken an active part in the White Guard movement is valuable enough in so far as it may intimidate the rest, the sequel to the death of a Communist worker (let alone of a revolutionary leader) ought to be a taking of bourgeois lives by the dozen.

Whence, adding to it Lenin's winged words, " Even if ninety per cent. of the people perish, what matter if the other ten per cent. live to see revolution become universal ? " we gain a fairly clear idea of what Red terrorism may mean to the Communist mentality. The Pravda, for its part, wrote: " Henceforth the

hymn of the working-classes should be solely a paean of hatred and revenge " ; whilst a proclamation issued by the " Muscovite Provincial Military Commissariat " on September 3 stated that

The working-classes of Soviet Russia have risen, and will draw for every drop of proletarian blood a riverful ot the blood of opponents of the Revolution, and for every drop of blood of our leaders of the Soviet and the proletariat again a riverful, and for the loss of every proletarian life the blood of hundreds of White Guards and sons of the bourgeoisie. Wherefore, as representing the working-classes, we, the Provincial Military Commissariat, do inform all foes of those classes that every case of White terrorism will have opposed to it merciless proletarian terrorism.

And, finally, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee led the way by convening a meeting for September 2 whereat it was resolved

That the Central Executive Committee do solemnly warn all hirelings of the Russian and foreign bourgeoisie that responsibility for any attempt upon the life of a leader of the Soviet Power, or of a person in any way engaged in furthering the ideals of the Social Revolution, will be laid solely upon the counter-revolutionary parties and those engaged in encouraging those parties' doings, and that any act of White Terrorism directed against the Peasants' and Workers' Power will be responded to by the peasants and workers with a Red Terror directed primarily against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie's agents.

In harmony with this decree was a resolution which the Soviet of People's Commissaries adopted in support of the Che-Ka's policy. It ended with the words : " Be it resolved also that any person found to be connected with a White Guard organisation, or conspiracy, or rebellion, be shot." And at about the same period Petrovsky, People's Commissary of the Interior, issued a telegram which, for its bizarre terminology, even

as for its sweeping sanction of illegality, deserves to become historic. Later the telegram was published in No. 1 of the Central Che-Ka's Weekly. Entitled " An Order relating to Hostages," it ran :

The murders of Volodarsky and Uritsky ; the wounding of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Director of the Soviet of People's Commissaries ; the execution of tens of thousands of our comrades in Finland, the Ukraine, the Don region, and Checho-Slovakia; the ceaseless discoveries of conspiracies behind our armies; the detection of the participation of Social Revolutionaries of the Right and other counterrevolutionary rabble in those conspiracies,—all these things, added to the strikingly small number of serious repressions and mass shootings of White Guards and bourgeois by the Soviet Power, show us that, despite the endless speeches about employment of wholesale terrorism against the Social Revolutionaries and White Guards and bourgeoisie, no Terror at all has come into being. Well, that indecision, those methods of vacillation, must be ended at once, and all Social Revolutionaries of the Right whose names may happen to be known to the local Soviets arrested, and adequate numbers of hostages taken from amongst the bourgeoisie and the ex-officers, and, should White Guard circles make the least attempt to resist, or the smallest White Guard activity show itself, mass shootings carried out unhesitatingly—the local and provincial executive committees to display all possible initiative in the matter. Also must the Government Departments use the militia and the Che-Kas wherever required, and see to the detention and the arrest of persons adopting false names and surnames, and unconditionally shoot anyone found to have a direct connection with White Guard activity. Likewise, all these measures must be fulfilled immediately. Let those charged with them advise the Department of the Interior whenever local Soviets are seen to be acting weakly. For thus alone will it become possible to clear the rear of our armies of White Guards and other such infamous conspirators against the rule of the working-classes and poorer peasants. Let there be no hesitation. Everywhere must mass terrorism be employed. Acknowledge receipt of this telegram, and forward it to all Soviets within your district.

In the same issue of the Weekly (for the Weekly was a journal specially designed to inculcate and popularise the Che-Ka's ideas and policy) there appeared an article entitled " The Question of Capital Punishment." The article said :

Let an end be put to these long and fruitless and useless discussions about Red Terrorism. Deeds, not words, are required. It is high time that a ruthless, absolutely efficient Mass Terror were organised.

This, with the notorious Order issued by Petrovsky, obviates any stressing of the moral of the idea that the working classes should be their leaders' avengers, or any enlarging upon Dzherzhinsky's " humane principles " in his work of Che-Ka organisation. Lack of journalistic conscience alone could have enabled Radek to assert in the Izvestia of September 6 that, " but for the faith of the working-classes that their Government can adequately retaliate for the blow, we should now be finding ourselves confronted with massacres of the bourgeoisie on a wholesale scale."

And what are we to think of a resolution passed by Communists in the province of Vitebsk which called for a thousand victims whenever a soviet worker should be assassinated, or of a request from a Communist nucleus of employees of a small tramway company that any assassination of a Communist should be followed with shootings of a hundred hostages, and any assassination of a Red soldier with slaughterings of a thousand Whites, or of a resolution of September 13, passed by a Communist nucleus of the Che-Ka of the Western District, that "infamous murderers [of soviet officials] should be wiped from the face of the earth," or of a resolution of Red Guard employees of the Ostro-gorod Che-Ka that " for the death of each Communist our foes must be slain by the hundred, and, for each

attempt upon the life of a leader, by the thousand, and by the ten thousand, as though we were exterminating parasites" ? In passing, be it observed how, the further we go from the centre, the more bloodthirsty becomes the local unit, until " by the hundred " has swelled to " by the ten thousand." The cause of this is that catch phrases uttered by, in the first instance (to judge from official reports), employees of the Central Che-Ka underwent repetition until they became stereotyped arguments, and, thus robed in hackneyed, outre terms, spread to one locality after another in proportion as the Bolshevists wrested further territory from their opponents, and Latzis, head of the All-Russian Che-Ka, further extended his jurisdiction.

In Kiev the local Che-Ka's sheet, the Krasny Mech ("Red Sword"), served a purpose identical with the purpose served in Moscow by the Weekly. Its opening issue contained an interesting article from the pen of the editor himself—Lev Krasny, who said, amongst other things:

Let the fangs of the bourgeois snake be extracted by the roots, its greedy jaws rent asunder, its fat belly gutted. Let the mask also be torn both from the face of sabotage-working, treacherous, mendacious, hypocritically complacent profiteering intelligentsia and from the face of our cunning, non-socially classified speculators. For the tenets of " humanity " and " morality " invented by the bourgeois for the better oppression and exploitation of the lower classes have no existence for us, nor ever have had.

This a writer named Schwartz capped with:

Let the recently proclaimed Red Terror be carried out in true proletarian fashion, even if, for the better reinforcement of the proletarian dictatorship, it becomes necessary to destroy the last slave of Tsarism and Capitalism. Indeed, let nothing deter us, but rather spur us on to more and more scrupulous fulfilment of the task which the Revolution has laid upon our shoulders.

On December 31 Kamenev stated: " The Terror has been forced upon us. The working-classes created it, and not the Che-Ka." Lenin, for his part, said to the Seventh Congress of Soviets, earlier in the year : " The Entente rendered the Terror necessary." And as he spoke he lied, for the Terror was created by the Che-Ka, and by the Che-Ka alone, through the method of covering Russia with a network of subordinate Che-Kas and " extraordinary commissions for combating counter-revolution and sabotage and speculation," until not a town or a village lacked its branch of the omnipotent Che-Ka of the centre, and the latter could act as the Government's all-connecting nerve until the last remnant of social right had become absorbed. And on October 18 even the Pravda, the official organ of the Central Committee, admitted[1] that by that time the catch phrase " All power to the Soviet! " had given place to the catch phrase " All power to the Che-Ka!" For by degrees, district, provincial, urban, cantonal, village, and factory Che-Kas ; railway, transport, and " battle front " Che-Kas ; " special branches of the Central Che-Ka for military affairs " ; "headquarters courts-martial " ; " military-revolutionary headquarters " ; " extraordinary headquarters " ; and punitive expeditions all became combined into a single main instrument for carrying on the Red Terror, so that Nilostonsky, author of Der Blutrausch des Bolschewismus (" The Blood Lust of Bolshevism "), estimated that Kiev possessed sixteen Che-Kas to its own cheek, and that all of them could pass death sentences, and all perpetrate mass executions in slaughter-houses identifiable only by ciphers.

[1] On October 18, 1919.

CHAPTER III

BLOOD STATISTICS

Let us build the new upon the ruins of the old.

THE Che-Kas were not instruments of justice: the terminology of the Central Committee, of the organ of " prosecution without mercy," did not understand them as such. Nor was a Che-Ka a court of inquiry; it was not a tribunal at all. In defining the purpose of the institution, the head of the model Che-Ka laid it down that

We, the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, are a military organ, with, for our field of battle, the home front in a civil contest. It is not ours to sit in judgment upon the enemy. It is ours utterly to destroy him. Hence, never must a Che-Ka pardon, for its exclusive business is to exterminate all who may be standing on the other side of the barrier.

And the meaning of such " ruthless prosecution " is not difficult to understand when we recall how to " the dead letter of the law " there succeeded " revolutionary experience" and " the revolutionary sense." For a sense of any kind is a thing subjective; whilst " experience " in such a connection never fails to lead to tyranny as a matter of fact—in the hands of a certain class of personnel, to the most appalling forms of tyranny. " We are not warring against individual bourgeois," said Latzis' article entitled "The Red Terror," published on Nov. 1, 1918,

We are out to destroy the bourgeoisie as a class. Hence, whenever a bourgeois is under examination the first step should be, not to endeavour to discover material of proof

that the accused has opposed the Soviet Government, whether verbally or actually, but to put to the witness the three questions : "To what class does the accused belong? " "What is his origin?" and "Describe his upbringing, education, and profession." Solely in accordance with the answers to these three questions should his fate be decided. For this is what " Red Terror " means, and what it implies.

Nevertheless Latzis' formula manufacture lacked originality, for he was but imitating Robespierre in the latter's address to the Convention of France on the legality of mass terrorism. Said Robespierre: "To execute the enemies of one's country, one needs but to establish the fact that they are themselves. Not their annihilation, but their chastisement, is what is called for." As an instruction to the judges of a legal tribunal, the dictum needs no comment.

But, fully to grasp the meaning of the Red Terror, we must first determine the number of its victims.

And in this connection the vast, the unprecedented, area of slaughter covered by the Soviet itself will help us to elucidate the Red Terror's system of application. Not that it is easy to determine the exact death statistics, and perhaps they never will be determined, seeing that the facts (1) that the names of the executed were published to the extent only of one per cent., (2) that most of the death sentences were carried out in secret dungeons, and (3) that many of the carryings-out were so contrived as to leave no trace behind them combine to render precision of fixation by an historian practically impossible.

The Year 1918 In writing his statistical articles, Latzis said :

The man in the street knows as well as do my colleagues of the Che-Ka that by this time the latter has brought about tens, and even hundreds, of thousands of executions.

This is true. Not for nothing do the three capital letters which stand for the title of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, of the Che-Ka, stand also for the three Russian words which denote "Death to every man." [1] And though at first Latzis put forward only the fantastically insignificant figure of " 22 " as the number of victims slaughtered during the first half of the year 1918, he had later to estimate that the number of persons shot in the twenty central provinces during the second half amounted to 4500.

The only thing of which the Che-Ka can be accused is of excessive leniency of application of capital punishment. It cannot be accused of excessive severity in the enforcement of executions, for our strong iron hand has never ceased to seek to lessen its victims. True, local Che-Kas have not always borne this maxim in mind : yet it would be fairer to accuse the Che-Ka in this respect than the provincial institutions. As a matter of fact, we have been too easy-going, too magnanimous, towards our vanquished foe.

Whence it would seem that Latzis conceived even a total of 4500 victims to be too few, although it can easily be shown that, even at that, the Latzian statistics covered but a very limited field. The first volume of The Che-Ka Red Book (which still exists as a publication, and is distributed to responsible Bolshevist officials) furnishes us with an historical document without a parallel. For in that volume is " Order No. 4," an Order which, dated July 21, 1918, and signed by one Lieutenant Balke, head of the German Commission which the Brest-Litovsk Treaty established, announced to the citizens of Yaroslavl that, the local detachment of the Northern Volunteer Army having surrendered to

[1] That is to say, the three Russian characters which usually are transliterated as "V," " Ch," and " K " begin both the title of the Vserossiiskaya Chrezvychainaya Komissia (" All-Russian Extraordinary Commission ") and the words Vsiakomou chelovekou kapout! " Death to every man ! ").

the Germans, it had therefore been handed over to the Bolshevist authorities, and 428 of its members shot. True, my card index gives the number of persons then executed as 5004 !—but then my data concerning provincial localities reached me only casually, and in driblets, or whenever I could succeed in getting hold of a provincial journal.[1]

Also, it must be borne in mind that formation of correct ideas as to numbers of victims was rendered the more difficult through the fact that officials so greatly cultivated brevity of diction. Examples are that once the Che-Ka of the district of Klin (Province of Moscow) announced that " several " counter-revolutionaries had been shot, and the Che-Ka of Voronezh that " many" had been shot, and the Che-Ka of Sestiorelsk (Petrograd) that, " after careful inquiry, some shootings have been carried out," whilst at all times the Bolshevist press made it its practice to publish reports with such obviously minimised coefficients as " one," " three," and the like.

Moreover, never was any statistical information whatsoever given concerning the mass executions with which it was the rule to accompany repressions of peasant and other risings. And the fact wholly puts out of the question exact fixation of numbers of victims sacrificed during the civil war phase. Therefore, my figures are valuable merely in so far as they make clearer than ever how absolutely incomplete are the Latzian returns.

In proportion as Soviet Russia expanded, in like proportion did the " humane activities " of Che-Kas expand, until by the year 1920, Latzis could come out

[1] For example, I failed to receive information as to twelve Social Revolutionaries whom Nos. 16 and 18 of the journal Revolutsionnaya Rossia reported to have been shot at Astrakhan on September 5, 1918.

with some fuller data, and state that from the year 1918 onwards as many as 6185 persons had been executed.[1] Yet still there remains the question whether this figure included the thousands of persons whom British returns reported to have been slaughtered in North-Eastern Russia (at Perm and elsewhere) during the period stated, for to the British returns in question there are added the words : "Constantly are persons of all classes, but more especially peasants, to be found resorting to this Consulate with stories of relatives murdered, and of Bolshevist mob fury wreaked."[2] Moreover, what of the 2000 military officers massacred in Kiev in 1918, of the victims who were either shot or hacked to death in the theatre whither they had been summoned for " verification of their papers " ? And what of the naval officers slaughtered in Odessa before the arrival of the Austrian troops (an English clergyman wrote at the time : " I have been told by a member of the Austrian Staff that the Bolshevists have supplied him and his colleagues with a list of over 400 officers murdered in Odessa and the district" [3]), or of the officers slaughtered at Sebastopol, or of the 1342 persons whom General Denikin's Commission proved to have been shot in Armavir during the January and the February of 1918,[4] or of the Sebastopol hecatomb which V. M. Krasnov's memoirs have described as carried out in batches of 67, 97, and over ? [5]

The truth is that wherever the Bolshevists made their appearance some tens, or even hundreds, of executions followed; executions which no trial what-

[1] See the Izvestia for February 8.
[2] British White Book, 1920. Also British White Book, 1921.
[3] British Parliamentary Paper, " Russia, No. 1," p. 56. Also " Sir C. Eliot to Lord Curzon," March 21, 1919.
[4] The Obstchoye Dielo, No. 56.
[5] Archives of the Revolution, III, 159.

soever had preceded; executions which were carried out merely on the strength of sentences passed by a local Che-Ka or some other temporary tribunal. True, these massacres in no way exceeded the other excesses of the civil war, but, for all that, they deserve to have devoted to them a separate chapter.

The Year 1919

Further on in his blood statistics Latzis states that during the year above-named the Che-Kas ordered 3456 persons to be shot. This makes a total of 9641 for the two years, with 7068 of the victims described as counter-revolutionaries, and the rest (this should be carefully noted) as persons shot, not for " bourgeois leanings" or "counter-revolution," but for such offences against the ordinary law as " lapses in fulfilment of official duty " (632), profiteering (217), and purely criminal acts (204).[1] All of which constitutes proof that during the period in question the Bolshevists used capital punishment not only for coercion of the bourgeoisie, but also (and to a degree never previously attained by a presumably civilised State similarly placed) for service as a general punitive measure.

But, to proceed. Latzis' figures purport to show that during the September of 1919 the Che-Kas shot only 140 persons, although for the same month—which, be it remembered, coincided with the "liquidation " of the famous counter-revolutionary plot with which the Socialist N. N. Shepkin was connected—the general

[1] In some localities it was impossible to verify numbers of victims even when the Bolshevist forces had withdrawn. Thus the Kharkov branch of the Denikin Commission, which accompanied representatives of the Kharkov town council and trades council and working women's union to eleven prisons in the region, and discovered in those prisons two hundred bodies, had still to estimate that the real number had been at least three times as large, since exhumation of the bodies buried in and beyond the public park was impossible.

press of the day gave 66 persons as shot in Moscow alone, and even the Bolshevist press admitted to a figure exceeding 150. Also, we have reliable evidence that, during July of that year, from 100 to 150 persons were shot in Kronstadt, even though 19 names only were made public, and that the Ukraine (where Latzis was raging in person) saw victims shot by the thousand, so that a Red Cross sister sent to England (for subsequent presentation to the International Red Cross Society at Geneva) an estimate of 3000 victims for the city of Kiev alone.[1] And an equally staggering total of Kievan shootings has been given by Nilostonsky, whom I have quoted already as the author of Der Blutrausch des Bolsche-wismus, and a writer who somehow contrived to acquire a particularly good knowledge of the doings of Kiev's sixteen operative Che-Kas, and has proved that knowledge by the accuracy of his topographical description, and by the fact that he did not confine himself to personal observations alone, but also utilised the materials published by the Rohrberg Commission, whose members included lawyers and doctors, and by whom exhumed corpses were photographed. Well, Nilostonsky has declared that the subsequently identifiable persons then shot in Kiev amounted to 4800, and that the general total probably amounted to 12,000. For the Terror assumed such unprecedented forms in that city, and in the Ukraine at large, that at last the central authorities themselves felt forced to despatch a commission to inquire into the doings of the provincial Che-Ka. And, in passing, it is only fair to say that ex-prisoners subsequently examined by Denikin's organisation were unanimous in their commendation of this Bolshevist-appointed mission.

[1] " In the Shadow of Death. Report of a Red Cross Worker on the Bolshevist Prisons in Kiev," in Archives of the Revolution.

And for a while the development of the Terror in the Ukraine halted ; but as soon as ever Denikin evacuated Kiev mass executions became the rule again, and were continued throughout the July and the August of 1919 on such a scale that on a single day (August 16) the Izvestia published the names of 127 persons shot. And these victims, incidentally, were the last to have their names made known by official command.

On the outskirts of Saratov there lies a grisly ravine. It is the scene of a host of local executions. Let me quote the words of an eye-witness as given in that amazing book or compilation which, issued under the title of The Che-Ka, deals exclusively with Che-Ka activity, and was given to the world by the Social Revolutionary Party in Berlin. The exceptional value of the book lies in the fact that its materials were obtained at first hand from prisoners actually confined within prison walls, or from actual eye-witnesses of events, and that the text of it was drawn up by men who had learnt through bitter experience what they were writing about. For impressions from real life are worth all the dead and dry paper in the world, and I knew those men personally, and know, therefore, with what care they sifted their materials until they had made of The Che-Ka an historical document equally graphic and reliable in its description of the Russian phase of to-day. It was for this book's benefit that a resident of Saratov has drawn the following picture of the Saratov ravine. The ravine lies on the Monas-tyrsky Slobodka side of the town ; and in future years there will be erected there, I hope, a memorial to Saratov's victims of the Revolution.

As soon as the snow melted in the ravine relatives and friends of the dead began to make their way thither, singly or in groups, but in every case with eyes glancing from side

to side. And though at first such pilgrims were turned back by the authorities, in time the number of them became so great that no one could prevent their coming. In places the spring floods had washed away the sand, and left many of the victims of Bolshevist tyranny uncovered, so that knots of them strewed the bed of the ravine from the bridge to the far end, a distance of from 45 to 50 sazheni.[1] And how many were they ? Probably no one could say. Even the local Che-Ka does not know. All that is known is that during the last two years (1918 and 1919) at least 1500 victims have been shot in the locality—some in accordance with sentence passed, and some in accordance with no sentence passed. Moreover, it was only during the summer and the autumn seasons that the condemned were brought to this ravine to be shot. In winter-time they were shot elsewhere. . . . The topmost layer consists of bodies shot as late only as last autumn : wherefore it is still fairly well preserved. The bodies lie clad in shirts alone, with their arms twisted behind them, and tied with cords. Some are thrust into sacks, and some are just as they fell. Truly the hollow is a terrible, a ghastly scene! But visitors do not hesitate to scan it closely. They are looking for some distinctive marking likely to help them in identifying a beloved one's body. Daily the ravine grows more terrible as daily it engulfs victims. And each fresh batch of executions causes portions of the sides of the ravine to fall in, and to re-bury recently uncovered bodies. Hence the hollow ever grows wider, and ever fresh sacrifices to the Revolution are exhumed by the spring floods.

Is this all a tissue of lies ?

In 1920 an equally gruesome utterance by Averbuch was published in Kishinev under the title of The Che-Ka of Odessa. It estimates that during the three months July-September 1919—that is to say, during the time between the official proclamation of the Terror and the Volunteer Army's occupation of Kharkov—the Terror took a local toll of 2200 lives. But as a matter of fact executions began at Odessa long before the official Proclamation of the Red Terror. They began there

[1] About a hundred yards.

within a week or a fortnight of the Bolshevists' capture of the town. Indeed, witnesses who gave evidence before the Denikin Commission were unanimous in saying that local mass shootings began to be carried out as early as the April of 1919, with public announcements of twelve, sixteen, or twenty-six executions at a time. At all events, during that April the local Izvestia wrote with the usual Bolshevist brutality :

The carp enjoys being seethed in cream, and the bourgeois being slain by a Power which is stern, and ready to kill him. . . . Even though our souls may revolt from the task, let us use strong measures, and bring the bourgeoisie to their senses, seeing that we need but shoot a few dozen of the fools, of the wastrels, and make the rest clean the streets, and set their womenfolk to scour out Red Guard barracks (though even this is too great an honour for them !), for the bourgeoisie to realise that our Government is a Government come to stay, and that it is useless to look for help from Englishmen or Hottentots.

And, on the Volunteer Army approaching the town in June, executions became more frequent still, and the local Izvestia wrote (the Terror had by then become "official"):

The Red Terror has been set in motion, and henceforth let all bourgeois strongholds be scoured out, and the bourgeois made to hiss, and the counter-revolutionary to crackle, under our sanguinary blows. . . . Let us dislodge such persons from their fastnesses with red-hot irons, and wreak upon them merciless vengeance.

And wreaked that " merciless vengeance " was. And with it went long lists of names which frequently omitted all mention of the " crime " committed, and adduced only a statement that the individual had been shot in the ordinary course of an officially ordained Terror. Margoulies' book, Years of Fire,[1] instances many such cases.

[1] Published by the organisation " Der Firn."

Almost invariably, too, our information goes to show that these lists of twenty or thirty names represented, in reality, lists curtailed. For example, a woman whose position enabled her to keep a particularly close eye upon events in Odessa has stated that, on one occasion when only eighteen names were published in the local Izvestia, she herself reckoned the shot to have amounted to fifty, and that on another occasion when only twenty-seven names were published, the list comprised, in reality, seventy, inclusive of seven females, although the official communique had made no mention of women at all. Also, an " examining member " [1] who had the misfortune to be arrested by his colleagues afterwards deposed that during the local reign of terror as many as sixty-eight persons were shot in a night, whilst official statistics issued by the Denikin Commission tell us that the number of shot in Odessa between April 1 and August 1 amounted to 1300. Lastly, from Niemann's memoirs we learn that, taking the South of Russia as a whole, the total of victims at that period cannot have reached less than 13,000 or 14,000.[2]

Again, a strike which occurred in Astrakhan during March simply drenched the district with working-people's blood.[3] An eye-witness has related :

As a meeting of about 10,000 labourers was peaceably discussing the question of wages, suddenly a cordon of sailors and machine-gunners and bombers surrounded the crowd, and, on its not at once dispersing, poured into it a rifle volley, and followed that up with a rattle of machine-guns and a deafening roar of hand grenades. Through the assemblage there ran a sort of shudder : the people seemed to fall forward upon their faces in a short of horrible silence, for the rattling of the machine-guns was such as to drown both the moans of the wounded and the cries of the dying. . . . Next

[1] That is to say, a " prosecuting counsel " for the Che-Ka.
[2] See also Margoulies' book, p. 279.
[3] See " Shootings in Astrakhan," in The Che-Ka, pp. 251 and 253.

day all the town seemed empty. Utter stillness reigned. Many had succeeded in escaping elsewhere, and many gone into hiding; but, for all that, the workers lost 2000 through casualties, and the first act of the Astrakhan tragedy came to an end.

Still more tragic was the workers' affair which began in Astrakhan on March 12. On this occasion the Bolshevists, after winning the " victory," lodged a portion of their prisoners in six kommandaturs, and the rest upon barges and steamers, one of which, the Gogol, became particularly notorious for the atrocities which she witnessed. Then telegrams concerning the " rebellion " were dispatched to the centre, and Trotsky, head of the Revolutionary War Council, wired back: " Destroy without mercy," and by the words sealed the fate of the imprisoned workmen. In fact, there then ensued, afloat and ashore, a raging orgy of bloodshed. Some of the prisoners were shot in the cellars and courtyards of the six kommandaturs, and others were hurled into the Volga from the barges and steamers, with stones tied about their necks, or with their hands and feet shackled. One solitary worker saved himself by hiding in an engine-room, and afterwards stated that during the first night alone 180 persons were thrown into the water. And multitudes also were shot in and about the kommandaturs : indeed, so many that it was only with great difficulty that their corpses could be conveyed to the cemetery, and dumped into heaps as " typhus cases." And the local Che-Ka likewise had to order that if any bearer should " lose " a corpse en route, he himself should be executed. For days every morning dawned upon streets strewn with half-naked, blood-soaked bodies of workmen, and upon relatives wandering in the half light in search of their lost ones.

Those shot on March 12 and 13, the first two days of

the repression, were exclusively members of the working classes ; but later the authorities realised that they had been foolish enough to put themselves into the position of being unable to blame the bourgeoisie for the disturbance, and hastened to follow the principle of " Better late than never " (and to divert the public's attention from their cruelty to the proletariat) by seizing any and every bourgeois, and executing those of them who happened to own any sort of immovable property, whether a house, or a shop, or a fishery, or anything else. " At dawn on March 15 not a dwelling in the town was not mourning a father, or a husband, or a brother. Some families, indeed, had lost every male member of their household." A house-to-house visitation alone could have established the actual number of persons shot. At first the figure 2000 was mentioned, but this grew to 3000 as the authorities published lists of hundreds at a time. And by the end of the month it had grown to 4000. Yet even this did not cause the authorities to abate their punitive measures. They seemed to have made up their minds that the workers of Astrakhan should be compelled to pay also for the many other strikes that were taking place as far away from Astrakhan as Toula, Briansk, and Petrograd. For the March of 1919 saw refusals to work sweep over Russia like a tidal wave. Only towards the close of April did the shootings begin in any way to diminish; and by that time Astrakhan had become a truly deplorable spectacle with its empty streets, its mourning homes, and its " Orders " plastered on fences, shop fronts, and private windows.

Next let us consider that remote Turkhestan where, in January 1919, the Russian section of the population rose in revolt against the Bolshevist tyranny. The rising was quelled.

The affair began with a house-to-house visitation until the barracks and the railway workshops all were overflowing with prisoners. And during the single night of January 20-21 there were so many executions that the authorities had to throw the corpses in heaps upon the railway line. For over 2500 were slaughtered. On the 23rd the task of repressing the rising was transferred to a local court-martial; and to the end of the year this court-martial continued to arrest and shoot victims.

Were these victims, then, included in Latzis' statistics ? Or, if not, why not, seeing that during the early days of the rising the local Che-Ka was still operating in Turkhestan, and that its successor, the court-martial, was but a repetition of that Che-Ka to its very personnel ?

The truth is that the question propounded by the Anarchist organisation Troud i Volya (" Labour and Freedom") on May 20 has never been answered, either by the Pravda or by any other official publication. For the question was based upon information published by the Social Revolutionaries of the Left in No. 4 of their prohibited journal,[1] and ran : " Is it true that daily during the past few months the All-Russian Che-Ka has been executing batches of from twelve to twenty-six victims ? " Never will the question be answered, for its very wording enshrined the truth. And it is manifest that that truth came to strike the Bolshevists as a disconcerting verity, for shortly afterwards an official decree transferred the right of passing death sentences exclusively to the permanent revolutionary tribunals. None the less, to the very eve of the promulgation of the decree we see the All-Russian Che-Ka and the Petrograd Che-Ka publishing lists of executed—yes, though the Che-Kas were just about to cease to be competent to execute

[1] The Volya Rossii, or " Will of Russia." The issue referred to is the issue of December 7, 1921.

except in cases of overt rebellion, and not a single such case had occurred in Moscow or Petrograd !

The data which enabled the Social Revolutionary organisation Narodnaya Volya to estimate that the number of persons executed by the Che-Kas during the first three months of the year 1919 amounted to 13,850 are not known to me. But does that estimate seem improbable—does its discrepancy with Latzis' figure (3456) render it impossible of belief ? For my own part, I believe the former, or larger, figure to be the more probable of the two.

And though an estimate of 138,000 as the number of persons shot up to March 20 of 1919 caused the Pravda to say " If this figure were indeed correct it would be a figure truly appalling ! " the figure, " appalling " though it may have seemed to Bolshevist journalists, understated the truth.

The Year 1920

For this year Latzis never published any statistics at all, and I myself, during the same year, was unable to continue my card-index library, for I had been flung into a Bolshevist gaol, and the Damocles' sword of Bolshevist " justice " was hanging over my head.

On February 20 there took place another official " abolition " of capital punishment, and Zinoviev impudently informed a meeting at Halle that " now that the victory over Denikin is won, no more death sentences will be pronounced in Russia! " But, as Martov pointed out, this statement overlooked the fact that always such "abolitions" proved to be temporary in their validity. And this happened on the present occasion, and before long the death penalty again became so " appallingly " (the Pravda's word) rampant that I do

not hesitate to doubt whether any cessation of executions did take place. I feel the less hesitation about it because I know so well the usual Che-Ka procedure on such occasions. Take their manner of applying " amnesties." I will explain the idea of their modus operandi.

Amongst the terrible inscriptions which condemned prisoners have left upon the walls of the building of the Special Branch of the All-Russian Che-Ka in Moscow there can be seen the lines : " This night, which is the eve of another abolition [of capital punishment], is being turned into a night of blood." And in the same way the eve of an " amnesty " always meant a fresh holocaust of executions, so that the Che-Kas might previously get rid of as many victims as possible. Yes, the very night hours which saw the printers setting up the type for the morrow's proclamation would see the prisons converted into scenes of massacre ! Not an ex-prisoner but could testify to the horrors of these " pre-amnesty " nights, and I myself shall never forget the night during the October of 1920 when a fresh " amnesty " in honour of the Revolution's third anniversary was pending, and I was lying in the Butyrka gaol. For during that night so many victims were shot that it was only with difficulty that they could be conveyed to the Kalomikov burial ground. In every case they were shot with a revolver through the back of the head. And whilst all this was happening in Moscow, similar things were happening in the provinces, and we find The Che-Ka relating that at Ekaterinodar the local Che-Ka imitated the Che-Ka of Moscow in causing its special branch to " shoot as usual" even after that the "amnesty" in celebration of the third anniversary had been declared. The Bolshevist press, too, regarded the proclamation only in so far as that it made it an excuse for publication of impudently men-

dacious and fulsomely eulogistic articles concerning the "mercifulness " and the " generosity " of a power which could grant so many amnesties, and make them embrace its every enemy.[1]

Similarly, in 1921, when a congress of the Communist International was about to be held, seventy persons were executed. True, the story was that they were being executed for such ordinary criminal offences as bribery and abuse of ration cards and theft of stores, but political prisoners who were previously confined with the executed have since expressed the opinion that the true object of the executions was to make blood-sacrifice to the coming congress. Usually, at such times, criminals of the ordinary type could rejoice, for the fact that political prisoners who were on the list for execution began hastily to be removed told its own tale—the tale that another "amnesty " was toward, and the politicals must be slaughtered before the " amnesty " would fall due and entail their release with the "ordinaries." [2]

" This night, which is the eve of another abolition of capital punishment, is being turned into a night of blood." Ample proof exists : ample proof that it was usual for the days before any "abolition" or " mitigation " of capital punishment to be converted into days of intensified bloodshed, until the custom practically became a law. Many of these massacres are explainable by no other method.

On January 15, 1920, the Izvestia published a notice signed by Dzherzhinsky, head of the All-Russian Che-Ka. Addressed to the provincial Che-Kas, it ran :

Owing to the recent annihilation of the forces of Judemich, Kolchak, and Denikin, and to the fall of Rostov, Novocherkassk, and Krasnoyarsk, and to the overthrow of the Supreme

[1] See The Che-Ka, p. 227. [2] See The Che-Ka, p. 102.

Autocrat,[1] new conditions have arisen in the struggle with counter-revolutionaries, and cumulative destruction of those counter-revolutionaries' organised forces has caused a radical blow to be struck at our enemies' hopes and calculations based upon a possible thwarting of our Peasants' and Workers' Rule by means of conspiracies, rebellions, and terrorist outbreaks. Yet there are counter-revolutionaries in Russia who still cherish hopes of the kind, and the State must be defended from such persons, and from the counterrevolutionary efforts which the Entente also is launching against the Peasants' and Workers' Government, and from the espionage and disruptive and subversive activities which, in company with the agents of the Entente, ex-Tsarist generals in the service of the same are carrying on in support of our enemies. At the same time, though counter-revolution, within and without the country, lies practically crushed, and has had its extensive organisations for effecting overt counter-strokes and delivering guerilla attacks exterminated, whilst in proportion soviet power has increased, and we find ourselves able at last to dispense with the supreme punitive measure, with the penalty hitherto applicable to opposers of our authority, and though also it is satisfactory for us to be able to report that the taking of Rostov and the capture of Kolchak have enabled the proletariat and its Government conditionally to lay aside the weapon of terrorism, the proletariat and its Government desire it to be remembered that, should the Entente again attempt to employ armed intervention with or without the assistance of mutinous ex-Tsarist generals, and so to disturb the established position of our soviet power, and the peaceful labours of our peasants and workers towards the construction of a new Socialist State, it will be necessary for us to restore terrorist methods, and to lay the responsibility for the soviet power being forced to resume those methods upon the Governments and the "governing classes of the Entente, and upon those Russian capitalists who sympathise with them. Meanwhile, let our extraordinary commissions turn their attention to the task of combating the foes represented by economic disorganisation, by speculation, and by negligence in official duty, so that when those foes have been overcome the extraordinary commissions aforesaid may

[1] Presumably, the Tsar.

devote their whole efforts to reconstructing our industrial life, and surmounting the obstacles born of sabotage, lack of discipline, and ill-will. In sum, we, the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, now decree (1) that from the date of the publication of this decree there be discontinued all applications of the supreme punitive measure, whether in accordance with sentence passed by ourselves, by the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, or in accordance with sentence passed by a local branch of Ourselves, and (2) that Comrade Dzherzhinsky be authorised to lay before both the Council of People's Commissaries and the All-Russian Executive Committee proposals pertinent to the due abolition of capital punishment, whether by sentence passed by an extraordinary commission, or by sentence passed by an urban or a district tribunal, or by sentence passed by Ourselves, the Supreme Tribunal of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. Let this decree at once be circulated by telegraph.

Those of us, however, who were still prisoners in Moscow, indulged in no rejoicing, for we remembered a decree of a year ago, a decree announcing in an exactly similar manner an end to Red terrorism. The following is taken from an article by Norov in the Vecherniya Izvestia (" Evening News ") of Moscow,[1] as written d propos of the fact that the seventeen Che-Kas of the writer's locality had just been deprived of their right to make independent pronouncement of death sentences :

At length the Russian proletariat has won the victory, and there is no longer need for terrorism, for the sharp, but perilous, weapon which ever tends to harm it's wielder by alienating and intimidating elements otherwise inclined to join in the work of a revolution. Let the proletariat renounce further use of that weapon and, instead, take unto itself legality and right.

Already I have mentioned that in January, 1919, the Soviet of Kiev solemnly pronounced that " capital

[1] February 15, 1919.

punishment is herewith abolished within the limits of our jurisdiction." And though the observer of the day might have been led by this to suppose that the Che-Ka in question had derived its inspiration for " abolition of capital punishment" from the Central Che-Ka itself, we know that the case was otherwise— that the Central Che-Ka in no way favoured the new measure, the "abolition," but, on the contrary, empowered Dzherzhinsky to assume the initiative only when the " abolition " had irrevocably been decided upon. And so in January the Che-Ka made its usual anticipatory haste to destroy its victims, and to shoot (according to my information) over 300 persons in Moscow alone. Madame Ismailovich, a well-known Left Social Revolutionary who was a prisoner at the time, has stated :

During the night before the promulgation of the decree of abolition of capital punishment, the Che-Ka took from this one gaol (not to speak of others) 120 souls. . . . And though previously, on the condemned hearing that the decree was going to be issued, they had assembled in the ward and, on the strength of the impending measure, implored a reprieve, both those offering resistance and those who were too weak to do so were butchered like cattle. One day, however, their obituaries will be written on the scroll of history.[1]

And in The Che-Ka another ex-inmate of a Muscovite prison has written:

Although the Soviet Council duly passed the decree and published it on January 1 (O.S.), the 160 persons who still remained in the Che-Ka building, and in the local cellars and dungeons and concentration camps, were all taken out and shot. They were exclusively persons whom the Che-Ka feared might prove troublesome if left alone, and amongst them were some who had already half completed

[1] The Kremlin through Prison Bars, p. 112.

terms of confinement in one or another concentration camp - an instance being a man named Khvalyusky who, involved in the Lockhart affair (the affair which became so notorious because of the severity of the consequent sentences), had been given five years' imprisonment. All throughout the 13th and the 14th (N.S.) people were shot. And in the course of the morning of the 13th the Che-Ka forwarded to our prison hospital a man so badly wounded in the jaw and tongue that it was only by signs that he could explain to us that be had duly been "executed," but not killed outright, and then remitted to the surgical ward. And whilst making the signs his face was radiant, and his glance beaming. Clearly he was finding it difficult to credit his good fortune. And though to this day I do not know his name, nor what the affair in which he had become involved, I do know that on the next night he was taken away (his bandages still upon him), and shot a second time.

Similarly in Petrograd the eve of the " abolition of capital punishment " was celebrated with shootings— with 400 of them, so that the slaughter lasted all night. And in Saratov too (according to a private letter) were fifty-two persons shot. And the same, as a matter of fact, everywhere else.

Hence the doing away with the death penalty meant no more than that the Che-Kas continued, unchanged, their high-handed proceedings. Yet one difference there was, and it lay in a certain cunning mental reservation. I will explain. On February 5 of that year the Izvestia reported that the provincial Che-Ka of Kiev had received a telegram from the head of the All-Russian Che-Ka, and that the telegram had explained that the decree concerning capital punishment had never been meant to apply to places at the front, and that the revolutionary tribunals at " places at the front " still might pass death sentences. " That front," the telegraphic explanation had added, " includes both Kiev and its province." And this piece of unexampled,

unblushing effrontery the Special Branch of the Central Che-Ka clinched with a circular that:

In view of the abolition of the death penalty, it is suggested that persons whose crimes would otherwise have rendered them liable to the supreme punitive measure do now be dispatched to the zone of military operations, where the decree concerning capital punishment has no force !

I myself remember an " examining justice " telling one of my comrades (a man who had been arrested for " counter-revolution " during the February of 1920) that, " although we cannot shoot you here, we can send you to the front for the purpose." And that " front " (it needs hardly to be added) was by no means limited to the regions where civil war was in actual progress.[1] But in time this subterfuge, " the front," came to be thought unnecessary. And possibly some of the Che-Kas never resorted to it, seeing that at all times Che-Ka work could be done in secret. Or, if they resorted to it, they did so only in exceptional cases. At times even the Izvestia forgot the " abolition," and once had the inadvertence to come out with a list of 521 persons shot actually between the " abolition " and the following May—176 of them put to death by one or another provincial tribunal, and the rest by the Muscovite Che-Ka itself! However, on May 24 capital punishment became officially re-established, on the plea that that course had been rendered necessary by the events of the Russo-Polish War. Which re-establishment has never since been repealed.

Peculiarly interesting is an Order issued by Trotsky

[1] Under date of August 30, 1919, the French author Cachin wrote to L'Humanite that, although the Terror, as such, had ended with the previous year, prisoners still were being sent to the front for execution. And, later, the Czech Socialist, Posenczka, rendered a like report. See the Posledniya Novosty (" The Latest News "—a foreign-published Russian journal) of June 30, 1920.

on June 16 ; and the more so if it be compared with the appeal of 1917. The Order said :

(1) Scoundrels advocating retreat must be looked upon as defaulters, as having refused to carry out a military command, and be shot. (2) Soldiers voluntarily leaving the front shall be shot. (3) Soldiers throwing away rifles, or selling their equipment, shall be shot.

This after that the All-Russian Congress of Soviets had said: "The capital penalty which Kerensky established at the front is herewith abolished " ![1]

Hence both at the front and everywhere else the re-establishment of capital punishment brought in a new orgy of executions. To begin with, in September 1919, a mutiny of the garrison in Smolensk was ruthlessly suppressed with the shooting not only of 1200 soldiers, but also of a large number of civilian participators in the emeute.[2] And though the Central Che-Ka ordered metropolitan journals to cease reporting shootings when they were ordered by the Che-Ka itself, those journals still published information concerning executions when they were ordered by the military-revolutionary tribunals of the provinces.[3] In which connection the official figures given were truly terrible, for, according to them, 600 persons had been shot between May 22 and June 22, and 898 during the following month, and 1183 during the next, and 1206 during the next. But invariably information of the

[1] Executions at the front had been taking place uninterruptedly. Madame Reissner said when writing of events in Sviashsk during the August of 1918 : " Red Guards were shot there like dogs, with twenty-seven leading Communists who attempted to desert on the Whites approaching the town—shot ' as a warning to others.' "

[2] See the Posledniya Novosty of October 20, 1919.

Nevertheless, shootings ordered by the Central Che-Ka were reported, and No. 206 of the Izvestia issued a list of sixteen persons shot by that Che-Ka for having misused their ration cards. Amongst the victims were Doctor Moudrov, a Princess Shirinskaya-Shakhma-tova, and others.

kind was held up until at least a month after the event —the fate of the 1206 victims shot during September, for example, being reported by the Izvestia only on October 17, with names and " crimes " appended. The " crimes " in question read all the more curiously when we recall how Red terrorism usually is justified. For the return says that shot for espionage were 3 persons, for treason 185, for refusal to carry out military orders 14, for mutiny 65, for counter-revolutionary activity 59, for desertion 467, for looting and brigandage 160, for concealment of arms 23, for drunkenness and insubordination 20, and for lapses in official duty 181. Whence it is no wonder that we can only with difficulty trace method in the dispensation of Bolshevist " justice " ! Next, on November 12, 1920, the Izvestia reported, as shot between February and September, 283 persons sentenced merely by order of the revolutionary tribunals attached to the Vokhra or " Home Service Army" (the Che-Ka's real instrument of operation): and as I myself possess a copy of such a sentence, I can see that it was published in the Muscovite Izvestia of November 18, and relates to Trounov, an engineer, to one S. S. Mikhno, ex-head of a minor administrative department, and to one N. S. Mikhno, ex-head of the artillery supply branch of the T.A.O.N.A. —all sentenced to death for " abuse of official functions" by the Vokhra's head military-revolutionary tribunal. And, adds the document: " This award is final, and cannot be appealed from to a higher court." In short, in the maze of blood statistics one could easily lose one's way. For blood flowed wherever Soviet Russia encountered the smallest check in life. Thus, during the summer of 1920 twenty doctors of Moscow were arraigned on a charge of having connived at exemptions from military service, and shot; whilst

later 500 others of the provinces were arraigned and shot in the same manner, and to the official press publication of their names there was appended an intimation that probably their patients would experience a similar fate. " Up to the very last moment," says a prisoner who lived with these doctors for a time in the Butyrka gaol, " they did not, could not, believe that they were going to be put to death." Moreover, unofficial sources have given their number as larger even than was given by the official return. And when, during the autumn of 1920, disturbances broke out amongst the Moscow garrison, and the inhabitants heard no more than vague rumours that soldiers were being shot in the Che-Ka building, the foreign-published Russian journal Volya Bossii (" The Will of Russia," a Social Revolutionary organ) published (under date of November 21) a definite list of those shot, which showed them to have amounted to between 200 and 300, whilst to this the Posledniya Novosty[1] appended 900 for October, and 118 for December. Again, a correspondent of the Volya Rossii estimated the number of persons shot in Petrograd during that autumn to have reached 5000, largely because, at the time, the various "risings " and " conspiracies " in connection with General Judenich's advance were being " liquidated." And we read in the Posledniya Novosty[2] of the summer an emigre's story of the rounding up, medical inspection, and shooting of a number of syphilitic subjects—" with a view to combating prostitution " ! And I, too, heard of such an occurrence, though I could not verify it, nor yet some persistent rumours concerning a shooting of Muscovite sufferers from glanders.[3] Yet there can be

[1] Of February 18, 1921. [2] In the issue of June 24, 1920.

[3]Certainly the British press, at that time, reported shootings of sufferers from the disease—of child sufferers. And see the Posledniya Novosty, No. 656.

no doubt that things just as monstrous, just as incredible, did come to be facts, and were not evolved from the imagination, under this unprecedented regime.

The North

Many sources are to hand shedding light upon the conduct of the civil war in Northern Russia. Even in Moscow we used to hear terrible stories concerning the punitive expeditions which the Special Branch of the All-Russian Che-Ka periodically dispatched to Vologda and other northern localities under a man called Kedrov. These expeditions were a sort of circuit assize, a new tribunal of the Che-Ka's own invention.[1] Kedrov has since, I believe, been certified to be a lunatic, and confined as such ; but at the time of which I am speaking he had become renowned for his cruelty, and we gain but a very faint idea of his punitive expeditions from the fragmentary reports published in the local press. True, occasionally that press did state that some hundreds of persons had been imprisoned, and dozens of other persons shot, after an " administrative-operative " (or a " revolutionary-military") tour of inspection ; but more often it gave vaguer news altogether—an example being that it scarcely made any mention at all of an expedition when Kedrov "re-examined" 1000 officers, and despatched to the centre of Russia a veritable multitude of hostages.[2]

Kedrov's conduct when leading an expedition to the extreme North never failed to be consistent: so that, compared with him, the Eydouk who shot officers

[1] In A. P. Akselrod's book Das Wirtschaftliche Ergebniss des Bolschewismus ("The Administrative Result of Bolshevism ") we find an account of a punitive train which was manned chiefly by Letts and sailors in order to patrol the Vologda-Cherepovetz line, and to halt at one or another station for the usual terrorist purposes.

[2] See the Izvestia of Voronezh of August 12, 1919.

with his own hand was a man sheerly humane. Periodically would the Izvestia of Archangel publish lists of persons to whom the Kedrov Commission had applied "the supreme punitive measure," and such a list lies before me now—a list of thirty-six names which is dated November 2, and includes peasants, co-operative employees, and a citizen who, an ex-member of the Duma, was a well-known inhabitant of Vyborg. And in another such list I find thirty-four names of persons shot for " active counter-revolution" during the Chaikovsky-Miller regime, and, in a third, twenty-two names, inclusive of the mayor of Archangel, of the editor of the Severnoye Slovo or " Northern Word," of the local postmaster, of a theatrical manager, of a shop assistant, and of several others. And elsewhere has a correspondent of the Posledniya Novosty testified to " shootings of boys and girls of twelve, sixteen, and so forth,"[1] so that Archangel came to be known as " The City of the Dead." And we have it from a correspondent of the Golos Rossii (" The Voice of Russia "),[2] from a correspondent able to provide first-hand evidence through having been resident in the town throughout the April of 1920, that :

Before the British troops had long been gone there was held a mock procession of empty red coffins, and then reprisals began. . . . All through that summer the town fairly groaned under the terrorist scourge; and though I lack figures to check the exact number of persons slaughtered there, at least I know that 800 ex-officers were put to death— officers whom the late Miller administration had authorised to proceed to London by way of the Mourmansk railway whilst the members of the administration crossed to Mourmansk on icebreakers. All of them were seized by the Bolshevists en route, and shot.

[1] The Posledniya Novosty of November 8, 1920. [2] Of March 25, 1922.

But it was in the Kholmogory district that the greatest number of executions of all took place. Said a correspondent in the Revolutsionnaya Rossia :

> Last September, when a "day of Red vengeance" was held, over 2000 people were shot. Mostly they were peasants and other Cossacks from the South. For it is not often now that intellectuals are executed. Probably this is because very few of them remain to be executed.

But what is the meaning of that phrase " peasants and other Cossacks from the South " ? The meaning of it is that a host of persons had been brought to Northern Russia from the South, for internment in the northern concentration camps, since that was the Southern Che-Kas' favourite resource with their victims ; they sent them to the northern camps, especially to the camp at Archangel, as one would send a person to certain death. And when we come to consider those " abodes of terror " (whence the condemned wretches seldom or never departed alive—they departed thence only after that they had been executed) we shall see that to be sent to such places practically was capital punishment.[1]

And similar methods were the rule in the Don and the Kuban regions, in Turkhestan, and in the Crimea, where the procedure was that suddenly there would be issued orders for a " registration " or a " re-registration " of ex-White officers and men, and that as soon as the loyalists concerned had reached the place indicated (they never seemed to think that anything untoward could be pending) they would be seized, bundled into railway trucks, and, just in the clothes in which they happened to be standing up, dispatched to Archangel, where the fact that they were wearing garments suitable enough

[1] See the section " Sketches of Prison Life," in The Che-Ka, pp. 118 and 120.

for the climate of Kuban and of the Crimea, but not for the atmospheric conditions of the remoter north, would join with the circumstance that the lack of washing facilities inevitably converted their bodies into masses of vermin to bring about, surely and speedily, the desired end—and the more so because the chance of obtaining warmer clothing from their relatives at home was as negligible as was the chance of being able to let those relatives know where the sufferers were.

The same procedure, too, was adopted in Petrograd towards that section of the Baltic Fleet's officers and men who had failed either to emigrate, or to go into hiding, or to join the forces of Judenich or Kolchak or Denikin. Presumably these men had served the Soviet Power loyally, for but few arrests amongst them had taken place during the four years of the Bolshevists' administration : wherefore when, on August 22, 1921, a " re-registration" was ordained, the men thought nothing of it as they left their ships, and went ashore, to go through a process to which they had become so well accustomed. But, arrived ashore, they were conducted, one by one, into a room, and there told to wait. And they waited for two days. And then, under a strong escort, they were marched to the railway station, bundled into luggage vans, and forwarded (with no explanation given) to prisons at Orel and Vologda and Yaroslavl and elsewhere. No one ever discovered the subsequent whereabouts of those men. All that official lists said of them was that they had been " sent northward," though from private conversations with Che-Ka employees it was gathered, in addition, that their chance of long remaining alive was a slender one.

Of Kedrov's northern exploits we obtain a glimpse when we read in the Volya Rossii[1]: " In Archangel, once,

[1] 1920, No. 14.

he mustered 1200 officers, took them over to Kholmogory, loaded them on to barges, and riddled them with machine-gun fire. Fully half of them were killed."

Perhaps such a senseless, vile proceeding seems incredible. Yet it is but a typical example of the fate which befell the vast majority of those who were sent to the Kholmogory camp. First pitched, in May 1921, in a spot some ten versts from Kholmogory, this settlement never ceased thenceforth to witness shootings in batches of from 10 to 100. Indeed, when matters reached the pass that an official investigator had to be sent northward he was told by the local inhabitants that the number of persons who had been disposed of to date could not have reached less than 8000. Not but that in the long run even such cruelty as this may not have proved to be kindness, seeing that in any case the Kholmogory camp, the " camp of death," saw to it that prisoners perished, slowly and surely, of ill-treatment and neglect.

And though it may be difficult for the moral sense to realise that drownings of people by bargeloads could ever have existed as a Russian official institution, seeing that such a system in the twentieth century recalls the worst doings of the eighteenth-century French Revolution, the barges in question are no fiction; and I can add to the two recent cases already cited a third one, more recent still, to show that the practice, once started, went on unchanged. The case is to be found related in Vladimir Voitinsky's preface to his work The Twelve Condemned, a work which turns upon the great trial of Social Revolutionaries in Moscow. We read :

In 1921 the Bolshevists took 600 persons from different prisons of Petrograd, dispatched them to Kronstadt, loaded

them on to a barge, and scuttled the vessel at a particularly deep spot. All but one were drowned. And he only escaped because he was able to swim to the Finnish shore.[1]

After Denikin's Departure.

Nevertheless, all these horrors pale, numerically at least, before the happenings in the South after the close of the civil war and the collapse of the Denikin Government. For it is then that we see coming into being a new Government, and that Government entering upon its functions amid a sea of blood, and wreaking both private and official vengeance through terrorism, and replacing civil war with a policy of complete annihilation of the surviving enemy, and of preventive intimidation of the civilian population. As soon as ever, in 1920, the Bolshevists had made their third entry into Odessa, daily executions of 100 or more persons became the rule, and motor-lorries had to cart away the dead in heaps.[2]

" Life here is like living upon a volcano," said a private letter to the editor of the Posledniya Novosty.[3] " Daily mass arrests of counter-revolutionaries take place in every quarter of the town, and individual arrests and domiciliary searches. It is sufficient for anyone to inform the authorities that such and such a family has a relative serving in the Volunteer army for a plundering of that family's house to be carried through forthwith, and the family itself to be made prisoners. Unlike last year, however, the Bolshevists now execute their victims very quickly, and publish no slaughter lists."

Again, we find a Constantinople correspondent of the Obstchoyi Delo,[4] a man who knew well what was happening in Odessa, sending his journal a heartrending series of accounts of life in that city, and saying that official

[1] The Twelve Condemned, p. 25.
[2] See No. 6 of the Revolutsionnaya Rossia.
[3] See No. 33 of the Posledniya Novosty.
[4] See No. 233 and following numbers of that journal.

information showed the number of persons who had been shot to date to amount to 7000, since at least 30 or 40 had been executed nightly, and sometimes as many as 200—even as 300.

Machine-guns did the work : the victims were too numerous for individual execution. Nor was any publication made of the names of the shot; the prisoners were just taken from the gaol by a wardful at a time, and exterminated.

An exaggeration ? Possibly. But at least an exaggeration resembling known facts, seeing that there stands on record the massacre of the ex-officers captured on the Roumanian frontier when attempting to escape to the forces of General Bredov. The attempt failed because the Roumanian Government refused to accord the fugitives licence of passage across the river Dnieper, and subsequently the 1200 officers Were dispatched to concentration camps, and executed there. And as regards their execution on May 5, I agree that one can scarcely believe the story that, owing to the Izvestia having published an announcement of the hecatomb, certain persons tolled the local church bells overnight, and the local ecclesiastics were subsequently arraigned and allotted sentences of from five to ten years.

To about the same period there may be assigned the execution of a number of Galicians who had played the Bolshevists false. The ex-Galician garrison of Tiraspol was shot to the last man, and, by orders from Odessa, the rest were sentenced to be punished for their "treason " with deportation. But no sooner had these Galicians, with their wives and children, assembled at the goods station than machine-gun fire was poured into them en masse, and such of the "traitors to the proletariat " (to quote the Izvestia) as were not killed thereby were done to death by a goaded-on Bolshevist mob.[1]

[1] See Ossipov's book, At the Cross Roads, 1917-1920, pp. 67 and 68.

Like shootings took place when the Crimea had been seized. " All persons of the region to whom I spoke," says a correspondent, " were unanimous in declaring that they had seen a list of 119 persons as shot on December 24." And, of course, the real number was, quite justifiably, rumoured to have amounted to 300. The shot on this occasion had been persons accused of participation in the so-called " Polish counterrevolutionary organisation." As a matter of fact that organisation had been engineered by agents-provocateurs in the employ of the local Che-Ka, and the agents had been given the job for the same reason as was the case when the " Wrangel conspiracy " caused sixty employees of the Shipping and Trading Company, and thirty-one other persons, to be shot for " espionage " : namely, that the agents might at least have their energies devoted to something.[1]

And the same informant tells us that " when the Bolshevists were in Ekaterinodar every prison there was overcrowded with inmates, most of whom were destined to be shot." To which a local citizen has added that between the August of 1920 and the February of 1921 the prisons of the town saw 300 victims slaughtered.[2]

Most of the shootings of that year, however, took place in August, when, on Wrangel's forces reaching the Kuban region, the head of the Kuban Che-Ka ordered that " all persons now lying in the cells of the Che-Ka building be shot," and answered a Che-Ka employee named Kossolapov, who had protested against the order on the ground of many of the prisoners not having been so much as examined, and others having been

[1] See the Posledniya Noxnsty of December 11.
[2] See the section " The Kuban Che-Ka," in The Che-Ka, pp. 227 and 228.

arrested merely for an infringement of the regulation prohibiting departure from a dwelling-house after eight o'clock at night, with the instruction : " Then separate those eight o'clock prisoners from their companions, and shoot the rest." This was duly carried out, and a local citizen named Rakitzansky, who was one of the seized, has described how it was done. His account says:

We were led forth from the cells in batches of ten, but were quite calm, for, on the first batch being removed elsewhere, we were told that the reason for their removal was that they might be questioned only. But when the second batch was removed we realised that the purpose of the removal was execution, and sure enough, those who were taken away were butchered like cattle.

With which the informant relates how he himself escaped death. He did so only through the fact that, as the Bolshevists happened at the time to be preparing to evacuate the town, the Che-Ka's documents lay ready packed up, and therefore the executions were taking place without the usual preliminary formalities—merely with a putting to each prisoner, when summoned to slaughter, of the question, " Of what crime do you stand accused ? " And since Rakitzansky noticed that any prisoner who stood accused only of having infringed the curfew order was set aside from the rest, he too said, when his turn came, that he had been arrested for having been found out of doors after nightfall, though in reality he had been arrested as an ex-officer— and so saved his life.

These executions were carried out by the Che-Ka's entire staff, and on the prison premises. Artabekov, the chief, himself gave the word to fire on each occasion, and the firings went on for twenty-four hours, during which time the neighbouring dwellers must have sat benumbed with terror. Two thousand persons were shot, but their names and their " crimes " still remain unknown, and probably always will

Male and female executioners and torturers active in Eupatoria during 1918.

[See page 72.]

remain unknown. Not even the Che-Ka's employees could throw light upon the point, for such men have come to look upon shootings as a trade, as an outlet for their sadistic tendencies, as a resource which calls neither for ceremony nor for any established procedure.

Again, in Ekaterinodar, on October 30, 84 persons were shot; during November, 100 ; on December 22, 184 ; on January 24, 210 ; and on February 5, 94. And there can be no doubt about these items, for, although the local Che-Ka believed itself to have destroyed all its documents, we have it from an eye-witness that subsequently "whole bundles of papers, inscribed ' To be shot,' were discovered in some earth closets."

Take another picture of life in Ekaterinodar at this period :

Between August 17 and August 20 the tenour of our existence was disturbed by troops of Wrangel's landing near Primorsko-Aktarskaya Stanitza, and proceeding to attack the town. A panic ensued, and Artabekov, our " Special Representative," ordered all persons who had been arrested by the local Che-Ka, or by its special branch, to be shot forthwith. At the time the provincial Che-Ka and the special branch had on their premises 1600 persons, and these were taken across the Kuban in batches of 100, and slaughtered with machine-gun fire. And a like course was pursued in the prison itself; save that there the inmates were shot against a wall. Lastly, public announcement of the affair was made, and lists of the executed published in columns headed " Retribution." Yet the number of names published was a good deal smaller than the reality. Also, when the Bolshevists were setting about their disorderly flight, they told the workers that if they (the workers) did not come with them they (the Bolshevists) would, on their return, hang every worker who had remained behind to a telegraph pole.[1]

Similar events befell when Wrangel came to menace Ekaterinoslav, and the town was evacuated.[2] Indeed,

[1] See No. 4 of Revolutsionnaya Rossia. [2]Arbatov's reminiscences in Archives of the Revolution, XII, 119.

everywhere such events befell, and when the Bolshevist forces were retreating from Vinitza and Kamenetz-Podolsk the Kharkov Izvestia (the organ of the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka) published lists of hostages shot to the number of 217, with names of peasants, thirteen teachers, several doctors and engineers, a rabbi, and a number of landowners and ex-officers included. The same, again, whenever the Bolshevist forces were on the advance. For example, no sooner was Kamenetz-Podolsk retaken than eighty Ukrainians were shot, and 164 seized and dispatched to the central provinces.[1] Also, a correspondent of the Revolutsionnaya Rossia[2] gives us the following description of Rostov-on-Don doings during the first few months of the new Government's rule:

Merciless, shameless looting is going on, with the Bolshevists robbing the shops and houses of the bourgeoisie, but, still more, the co-operative stores. And they keep shooting officers, or else hacking them to pieces with swords— sometimes in the street as soon as caught, and sometimes in the officers' homes. . . . Recently, too, they set fire to the military hospital on the corner of the Taganrog Prospekt and Temeritskaya Street, although the building was crowded with sick and wounded officers at the time, and many of the latter were too weak to move. In fact, forty were burnt to death. . . . The exact number of shot and hacked is not yet known. All that is known is that the number must have been very large. And with each addition to the local Soviet's power its methods are growing bolder. First it placed the whole of the Cossack population under surveillance. Then it brought into operation a Che-Ka under Peters, and kept the engines of two motor lorries in constant running, that the sound of the shots might not be heard outside the building. . . . Peters frequently attends the executions in person. They take place in batches, with perhaps as many as ninety persons shot in a single night.

[1] See the Posledniya Novosty of December, 1920.
[2] As reported in No. 9 of that journal.

Also, Red Guards have told us that Peters' little son of eight or nine will run after him and cry : " Daddy, daddy, let me do it too ! "

Associated with the local Che-Kas were local revolutionary tribunals and Soviets. Nor, frequently, were captured persons looked upon as prisoners of war, but dubbed, rather, for the purpose of being shot, agents-provocateurs, or else " bandits." This is how the " trial" of Colonel Sukharevsky at Rostov was engineered ; and the same with a " trial " of a Cossack named Sniegirev at Ekaterinodar, and with the " trial " of a student named Stepnaov and others at Touapse.

In and around Stavropol wives were shot for having failed to notify that their husbands had fled. And even children of fifteen and sixteen were shot, and persons of sixty—yes, shot with machine-guns, or else hacked to pieces with swords. Nightly shootings took place in Piatigorsk and Essentouky and Kislovodsk, whilst the lists of the slaughtered (amounting to some 240 names apiece) would be headed " Blood for blood," and conclude with the words " To be continued." And as regards a pretext for the orgy, it was found in the assassination of one Lenitzov, head of the Che-Ka of Piatigorsk, and of a certain Lapin, a military commissary—both of these fellows having been stopped in a motor car by a posse of horsemen.[1]

The Crimea after Wrangel's Departure.

For months after the " liquidation " of the Denikin regime exploits like the foregoing were continued. Next, Wrangel came and went, with the numbers of victims growing to tens of thousands, and the Crimea coming to be known as " The All-Russian Cemetery,"

[1] See No. 7 of the Revolutsionnaya Rossia.

and refugees thence reaching Moscow with terrible tales of what had happened. Indeed, at this period the journal Za Narod (" For the People ") estimated the total of those shot in the Crimea to have reached 50,000, whilst other computers have placed it variously at 100,000, at 120,000, and at 150,000. But it is impossible to say which of these figures approaches most nearly to the truth. All that can really be said is that, even if the total was smaller, far smaller, than any of the figures given above, that does not lessen the cruelty, the abomination, of slaughtering persons after Frunze, the then Commander-in-Chief, had guaranteed them an "amnesty."[1] And another functionary active in the Crimea was Bela Kun, the notorious Hungarian journalist, who was not ashamed to say publicly :

Comrade Trotsky has declined to visit the Crimea so long as a single counter-revolutionary remains alive there. But as the Crimea is a bottle-neck whence no counter-revolutionary can possibly escape, it will not be long before we have raised it from its revolutionary level of three years behind the times to the general revolutionary level of Russia.

And so the Crimea was " raised " to that level. And the method employed for raising it was the method of perpetrating such a series of mass executions as stands without parallel in history. Not only were people shot by scores at a time; they were also hacked to pieces, and, as often as not, before the very eyes of their relatives. Said an insistent telegram from Skliansky (Trotsky's temporary substitute on the Central Revolutionary-Military Council): " Let the struggle continue until not a single White officer remains

[1] Before the Lausanne Tribunal the well-known writer, Ivan S. Shmelov, stated that he reckoned the slain in the Crimea to have reached 120,000.

Various executioners and torturers active in Eupatoria during the Crimean Terror.

[See page 76.]

alive on Crimean soil." Later the All-Russian Executive Committee held an enquiry into the massacres of 1920 and 1921, and, on questioning commandants of towns, found all of them (according to the Roul[1]) to cite in their defence a second telegram sent them either by Bela Kun or by Bela's " secretary " (a woman known as "Zemliachka," or " the Country Woman," though her real name was Samoilova, with her " special services rendered" rewarded, in March, 1921, with " the Order of the Red Flag " [2]) for the purpose of bidding all such town commandants summon for " registration "(and execution) all ex-officers, and all ex-officials of the late War Ministry (under Wrangel's Government) who might be resident in their districts. At all events, it was upon such a " registration " basis that the executions were carried out. And subsequently, A. V. Ossokin stated to the Lausanne Tribunal that " the queues waiting to register ran to thousands in length, as though each man had been seeking to win the race to the grave." [3]

And for months the slaughter continued, and a nightly rattle of machine-guns was heard. The first night alone saw thousands of victims fall [4]—1800 in Simferopol, 420 in Theodosia, 1300 in Kertch, and so forth. But at last, in dealing with such large numbers, difficulties were encountered, for though the majority of the victims were stupefied with terror, some did retain sufficient presence of mind to attempt escape, and it became necessary to shoot smaller parties at a time, and to divide the nightly quotas into two shifts each—

[1] " The Helm," a Berlin-published Russian journal. The above refers to its issue of August 3, 1921. See also No. 392 of the Posledniya Novosty.

[2] This woman is said later to have been caught and put to death by the Greens, the rebel soldiers of the South.

[3] See also the Posledniya Novosty of August 10, 1921.

[4] See the Obstchoye Dielo of July 10, 1920.

Theodosia, for example, making the two half-quotas each include 60, or a total of 120 to a night. And during the shootings the occupants of the neighbouring dwellings were forbidden to leave their homes on pain of death—they had to sit and bear the torturing horror of the sounds as best they could. And a special danger beset them in the fact that, perhaps, a half-shot victim would come crawling to their door and moan for help, and so involve the occupants of the dwelling in the risk of losing their own lives if mercifully they should take him in.

At first the corpses were disposed of by dumping them into the ancient Genoese wells ; but in time even these wells became filled up, and the condemned had to be marched out into the country during the daytime (ostensibly, " to work in the mines ") and there made to dig huge graves before daylight should fail, and then be locked into sheds for an hour or two, and, with the fall of dusk, stripped except for the little crosses around their necks, and shot. And as they were shot they fell forward in layers. And as they fell forward their own layer of quivering bodies speedily became covered with the following layer; and so on until the graves lay filled to the margin. Only when morning came did any victim who seemed to be still breathing have his brains dashed out with a piece of rock. And, for that matter, many were buried alive.

At Kertch the Bolshevists organised what they called " trips to Kuban," when the victims were taken out to sea, and drowned, and their terror-stricken wives and mothers flogged with nagaiki [1] or, in a few cases, shot along with their sons or husbands. And for a long time bodies of such women, with babes still clasped to their breasts, could be seen lying outside the

[1] Whips of horsehide.

Jewish cemetery at Simferopol. At Yalta and Sevastopol stretcher patients were carried from the hospitals, and shot. And these victims were not exclusively ex-officers. On the contrary, they included common soldiers, doctors, nurses, teachers, railwaymen, priests, and peasants.

And when the towns' quotas of victims had become exhausted the Bolshevists began to draw also upon the villages, where, as a rule, the slaughter was carried out on the spot. And meanwhile mass arrests of hostages began in the towns, and in Simferopol alone 12,000 were seized on December 19 and 20. Next, this phase of the delirium having passed, the Bolshevists took to imprisoning people on the strength of certain " inquiry forms." The procedure in this case was as follows. All ex-officials and persons over the age of sixteen had to fill in several dozen documents requiring answers to forty or fifty questions; and these questions went carefully into every detail of the examinee's life during the examinee's every year of existence. Most of all was attention paid to the examinee's origin and social position, and position vis-a-vis a father's or a grandfather's or an uncle's or an aunt's property—also to the examinee's sympathy with, or antipathy to, the Red Terror, the Allies, and Poland, and to the question whether or not the examinee had sided with Wrangel, and, if so, why he or she had not fled to join that General's forces. Each such query had, willy nilly, to be answered. And after a fortnight or so the " registered " had to attend before the local Che-Ka, and be questioned further, and subjected to a bombardment with unexpected and wholly irrelevant inquiries. Only if an examinee finally passed this test did he or she receive a certified " enquiry form," coupled with a reminder that thenceforth the examinee's

life stood in fee to the correctitude of the information contained in the form.

Of those who contrived, after all this, to remain in the present world, a large number were sent to the concentration camps of the North, where usually they found their last resting-place. Even if a prisoner did escape from such a camp he brought down summary vengeance upon his non-escaped comrades—an instance being that, once when a party of six officers got clear of the concentration camp at Vladislavlevo railway station, thirty-eight of their fellows were executed forthwith.[1]

For its part, the Che-Ka of Kertch adopted the plan of registering the population simultaneously, en masse, and, for the purpose, surrounded the town with a cordon of patrols, and then ordered the local inhabitants to lay in three days' stores, and forbear to leave their dwellings on pain of death. The subsequent inquiry conducted resulted in a dividing of the population into three categories, with the 800 members of the first category notified in the Kertch Izvestia as " persons who have taken an active part in the late campaign " [against General Wrangel]. When they were shot their surviving fellow townsmen reckoned that their real number had amounted to at least double the official figure given.[2]

But it was at Balaklava and Sebastopol that the greatest number of executions took place, for, if we are to credit certain statements made by eyewitnesses, the Che-Kas of the two townships shot a joint total of 29,000 souls,[3] with, amongst them, at Sebastopol, 500 stevedores for having helped to embark

[1] See No. 221 of the Posledniya Novosty.
[2] The Dielo of January 13, 1921.
[3] The same of November 9, 1921.

General Wrangel's army.[1] Also, when the Izvestia published (on November 28) the first general list for the region, that list of 634 names was seen to comprise 278 names of women; whilst when, on November 30, a second general list was published, 88 of its 1202 names, again, were feminine names.[2] Hence it has been estimated that during the first week of the Bolshevists' rule of the Crimea Sebastopol alone saw over 8,000 souls put to death. And it was not only shootings that were carried out in Sebastopol. There were carried out there, and for the first time, also hangings. Indeed, hundreds of prisoners were executed in this manner, and both the Posledniya Novosty and the Dielo and the Roul of the period repeat nerve-shattering stories related to them by the few people (mostly foreigners) who subsequently contrived to get clear of the Crimea's confines. Possibly reminiscences of the sort were partially subjective; yet to discredit them in whole is sheerly impossible. Wrote a correspondent to the Roul:

In time the Nakhimovsky Prospekt became simply festooned with corpses of officers and private soldiers and civilians who, arrested then and there in the street, had been executed on the spot of arrest, and hurriedly, and with no previous trial.[3]

And wrote a correspondent to the Dielo :

The city is like a city of the dead, with the population lying hidden in cellars and lofts, and every fence and wall and telegraph post and telephone standard and shop front and signboard plastered over with posters saying " Death to the Traitors ! " [4]

[1] No. 148 of the same, and also the Posledniya Novosty of August 16, 1921.
[2] The Dielo of December 11, and other journals.
[3] See the Roul of December 11.
[4] See the Dielo of December 8, 1920.

And from another eye-witness we have it that " officers were hanged in full uniform, complete to the epaulets, but civilians in underwear only. And there they swung to and fro ' as a warning to others.' "

Yes, every available pole and monument was used for the purpose, and also every available tree. In particular did the Istorichesky Prospekt become richly garnished with wind-swayed corpses ; and the same with the Nakhimovsky Prospekt, Ekaterinskaya Street, Bolshaya-Morskaya Street, and the Primorsky Boulevard. Previously Commandant Bothmer, the lieutenant of the German contingent hitherto in occupation of the Crimea, had ordered the population not to make any complaints against the Soviet's officials, " since such complaints only help the White Guards in their resistance." And such was the orgy of madness and slaughter as to include even shootings of sick and wounded from the hospitals—of a batch of 272 persons from the Zemstvo's sanatorium at Aloupka,[1] and of doctors and Red Cross nurses (we find seventeen nurses' names in a single list) and Zemstvo employees and the well-known National Societist A. P. Laurier (with, as accusation against him, that he had been editor of the Youzhniya Viedomosty or "Southern Intelligencer " !) and Plekhanov's secretary, the Social Democrat Loubimov, and many others who had taken no part whatsoever—at all events, no active part—in the struggle.

In fact, these lists might well have had appended to them the words of Ivan the Terrible under similar circumstances: " Together with a great multitude of others whose names Thou alone, O Lord, wilt remember." And said a correspondent of the Social

[1] See the Dielo of December 24, 1920.

Revolutionary journal Volya Rossii or " The Will of Russia " : "Even such names of the slain as the Bolshevists reported amounted to thousands."[1]

The Year 1921

During this year also the Terror in the Crimea continued, so that A. V. Ossokin stated before the Lausanne Tribunal:

During July last over 500 hostages were imprisoned on charges of having communicated with the Greens. And before the year was out many of these hostages even were executed, with some twelve or thirteen women included amongst their number—three in Eupatoria during April, five in Simferopol on March 25 (O.S.), one in Kapasoubayar during April, and three or four in Sebastopol during the same month, with, as principal accusation against them, either that they had helped relatives to escape to the mountains or that they had furnished persons contemplating such a course with provisions, though in reality the accused had furnished the provisions without knowing that the persons whom they thus assisted were not refugees at all, but disguised Red Guards and agents provocateurs.

Also, whole villages were presented with an ultimatum that "unless you people recall those of your inhabitants who have taken to the mountains, you shall have your village burnt over your heads." Demerdzhi, Shoumi, Korbek and Sabli were amongst the villages so addressed. However, the threat in no case came really to be fulfilled, for, on its utterance, the Greens issued a counter-proclamation that in such a case they would slaughter every Communist family and individual Communist whom they could catch, whether in town or in village.

And in Ekaterinoslav and the Northern Taurus, during the winter of 1921-22, the same policy of hostage

[1] See the issue of August 31, 1921.

seizure shed rivers of blood. Also, wholesale disarmaments of villages took place; the procedure being to fix a given quota of arms for surrender, within twenty-four hours, by a given village, and if (as usually happened) the quota specified exceeded the whole store of arms possessed by the village, to seize ten or fifteen of the villagers as hostages, and then, on definite ascertainment that the village could not comply with the order issued, to shoot the hostages in the fashion which had become stereotyped.

And, on a base used by the Greens being discovered near Theodosia, three boys and four girls (all aged about sixteen) were shot. Similarly, a trial of Greens in Simferopol resulted in the deaths of twenty-two persons, including a local university lecturer, and some others.

And ever as the Krim Rosta [1] reported new " conspiracies " there followed upon the discoveries executions, even though the "conspiracies " had seldom had any connection whatsoever with the Greens. And also upon the Tartar population did the Terror descend. During August several scores of Mahomedans were shot for "holding a counter-revolutionary meeting in their Mosque." [2]

In September two parties of Greens under a Tartar named Malamboutov placed sufficient reliance upon an " amnesty " offered them to descend from the mountains, and, in the case of Malamboutov and some others, to meet with a remarkable fate. The incident has been thus described by the author of a diary published in the Posledniya Novosty :

As soon as he descended from the mountains, Malamboutov was seized by the local Che-Ka, and compelled to sign an "appeal" to such of his fellow Greens as had remained

[1] The Bolshevists' telegraphic agency in the Crimea. [2] See the Dielo of August 28.

behind in hiding: the " appeal" stating, after referring to the Bolshevists' " love of peace," that " the only remaining foe of ourselves, of the Green Army, is the common foe of us all, the foe represented by Capitalism." Then, the "appeal" issued, a posse of officials re-conveyed Malam-boutov and his staff to the mountains, and had pointed out to them by their captives every hiding-place hitherto used by the Greens : with the result that for the next two days Malamboutov's involuntary betrayal of his comrades caused the peasantry of the neighbouring villages to sit listening to heavy firing in the country where the Reds were running down the last remnant of the Greens. Later Malamboutov and his staff themselves were shot on the usual plea of " espionage," and the fact posted up (under the repellent heading of " This is the class of crime which the soviet power most loves to punish ") on every street corner in the neighbouring town. In the list were sixty-four names, but it continued to be whispered amongst the terrified inhabitants that, though the Che-Ka might have succeeded in laying by the heels the persons named on the list, these represented no more than a fraction of the Greens who had accompanied Malamboutov from the mountains—that, as a matter of fact, the remainder of the two bands had discovered the treachery in time, and availed themselves of the fact that the " amnesty " had allowed them to retain their weapons to fight their way back again. And later their side avenged the death of Malamboutov with such cruel, such savage, reprisals upon every Communist whom they caught as to partake almost of a medieval character.

In fact, terrorism remained rampant in the south so long as the Greens continued their activities there. In Ekaterinodar, on a "mutiny " being quelled on September 27 and 28, the local Izvestia published a list of 104 executions which included a bishop, a priest, a professor, a military officer and a leading Cossack. And at Novorossisk, in the neighbourhood of which Green activity became especially noticeable, the Che-Ka attached to the Black Sea flotilla executed both rebels and hostages by hundreds, in addition to daily shootings

in connection with a " liquidation " of twelve White Guard associations around Kharkov, and of the " conspiracies " which General Ouktomsky and Colonel Nazarov organised around Rostov.

Again, when, towards the close of March, the Che-Ka of Piatigorsk discovered a local " conspiracy," there followed shootings of fifty of the " conspiracy's" leaders[1]; whilst at Anapa sixty-two persons were shot for attempting to escape from Bolshevism by way of Batoum, even though (as came out later) they had manifestly been egged-on to the attempt by agents-provo-cateurs employed by the local Che-Ka.[2]

The following proclamation which Lautzer, " Special Representative of the All-Russian Che-Ka for the Northern Caucasus," addressed to the populations of the Kuban district and the Black Sea littoral will illustrate better than anything else the state of things when those regions were held by the Bolshevists' Don Army.[3] Said the document:

(1) Any village or hamlet found to be harbouring persons connected with either the White Forces or the Green shall be razed to the ground, and its adult inhabitants shot, and its property confiscated. (2) Any person found assisting either of those Forces shall be shot. (3) Inasmuch as members of the Green Forces hiding in the mountains usually leave relatives behind them in their villages, such relatives shall be kept under observation and, if the forces in question advance any further, and the relatives concerned be found to have got any kinsman bearing arms against us, be shot, and the families of them deported to Central Russia. (4) Should anything in the nature of mass opposition display itself in village, settlement, or town, we shall, in our turn, be compelled to employ mass terrorism, and to execute hundreds of the inhabitants for

[1] See No. 81 of the Pravda.
[2] See the Posledniya Novosty of October 14.
[3] Green Book, A Record of the Peasant Movement in the Black Sea Provinces, by N. Voronovich.

each soviet worker who may be murdered. For the soviet power is determined that its heavy, ruthless hand shall sweep away its every foe.

Similarly were all rebellions in the Ukraine quelled, and no difference at all is discernible between the happenings of 1920 and those of 1921, save that sometimes the outbreaks came to assume such varying guises that it is not always easy to distinguish whether a rising was intended to procure the independence of the Ukraine, or to assist Makhno ; whether it was connected with the Whites, or involved with the Greens ; whether it was a movement of refugee bands, or a movement of purely peasant origin; whether it was a revolt against the weight of the grain tax, or an affair altogether apart from " White Guard conspiracies " and the foregoing factors.[1] The only thing of which we can be certain is that at least the Bolshevists did not differentiate as regards these affairs' quelling. For example, a " Special Order No. 69 Relating to the District of Kiev," issued in 1920, enjoined not only all necessary employment of mass terrorism, but also infliction of death upon any person found possessed of a single cartridge after the expiration of any date for surrender of arms.

Thus Bolshevist terrorism needed but to encounter the smallest opposition to swell up into a sanguinary massacre. In Proskurovo alone 2000 peasants fell victims, and as soon as ever forces under the ataman Tiutiunik took the field in the neighbourhood of Kiev that city too began to see daily shootings of dozens. Below follows a resume of an official document which is a copy of the minutes compiled by the five members of a Che-Ka committee which subsequently tried Tiutiunik's beaten following. Issued on November 21, 1921,[2] the

[1] In this connection, see No. 11 of Revolutsionnaya Rossia.
[2] See the Posledniya Novosty, No. 572.

document stated that during the fighting 400 of the enemy had been killed and 557 taken prisoner, and some of the rebels' leaders, on realising the hopelessness of their position, compelled to commit suicide with bombs and rifles. Then the document added that Tiutiunik and certain of his staff had been guilty of " conduct unworthy of any persons in command," in that they had assured their own escape from the field before the fighting had well begun. For the rest, the Che-Ka committee referred to tried 443 persons, of whom it shot 360 on the ground that they had been " evil and active bandits," and forwarded the rest for further examination by " the inquisitional staff." And later the Petrograd Pravda announced that "because of the conspiracy recently discovered in Kiev, a conspiracy directed by the All-Ukrainian Rebel Committee, 180 officers of Pethera's and Tiutiunik's forces have been placed under arrest." And, that being so, we can pretty safely assume that it was not long before a subsequent communique announced those arrested officers' execution. Later, when a professor of the Kievan Polytechnic named Koval escaped from Kiev and reached Poland, he reported that yet another " discovery of a conspiracy of the usual type had led to an intensification of the Kievan Terror which involved nightly shootings of from ten to fifteen persons."

And when an exhibition in advertisement of the doings of the local executive committee was held in the Pedagogic Museum, tables of the shootings gave, as a minimum monthly number of those shootings, 432.[1]

Particularly large was the number of Petlura " conspiracies " then discovered. In connection with them sixty-three persons (including a Colonel Evtikhiev)

[1] See the Posledniya Novosty of September 18.

Male and female torturers of Eupatoria.

[See page 89.]

were shot in Odessa,[1] batches of fourteen[2] and sixty-six in Tiraspol,[3] thirty-nine in Kiev (mostly members of the intelligentsia),[4] and 215 in Kharkov—the victims in the latter case being Ukrainian hostages slaughtered in retaliation for the assassination of certain Soviet workers and others by rebels.[5] And, similarly, the Izvestia of Zhitomir reported shootings of twenty-nine co-operative employees, school teachers and agriculturists who could not possibly have had anything to do with any Petlura " conspiracy " in the world.

Everywhere, too, we read in Bolshevist journals such communique's as : " Five counter-revolutionary organisations, covering the whole of Podolia, have been discovered," " Sixteen persons have been shot at Chernigov," and the rest. Hence it is no more than the truth to say that the mass of such official printings renders individual distinction between them almost impossible.

Akin to the fate of the Ukraine was the fate of White Russia, where the year 1921 proved particularly prolific of reports of "rebellions," and of accounts of punitive expeditions dispatched to shoot—with or without trial —all who had participated, or been reported as participating, in those " rebellions." " Dozens of persons were shot daily," a correspondent of the Dielo [6] has stated. " In particular were many White Russian leaders put to death. At Minsk a trial of Savinkov supporters has just ended. Seven have been executed." [7] Also the English Daily MaiVs correspondent at Reval wrote : " Here, during September, forty-five persons were shot."

[1] See No. 217 of the Izvestia.
[2] See the Dielo of September 22 and October 7.
[3] See the Posledniya Novosty of December 21.
[4] See the Roul of September 80.
[5] See the Roul of December 7, and the Frankfurter Zeitung of about the same period.
[6] Of April 19, 1921.
[7] See the Posledniya Novosty of August 30.

To the Che-Kas of Podolia and Volhynia there was entrusted the special duty of " cleansing " the two provinces of all who had displayed pro-Polish sympathies during the Polish occupation; and this process of " cleansing " the Che-Kas was effected with the usual mass arrests, the usual mass deportations to the central provinces, and the usual mass executions.[1]

Hence there seems to have been always an intimate connection between " movements of rebellion" and wholesale shootings of Left Social Revolutionaries, of Anarchists, and even of Tolstoyan Anarchists, the most pacific of the sections of the Anarchical group—mostly, in the case of the latter, for refusals to serve in the Bolshevist Red Army ; and an authoritative pamphlet on the subject which has been published in Berlin says, after citing a large number of instances of the kind :

We could go on citing instances indefinitely, and so use them as to carry conviction that even the most painstaking historian of the future could never collate a volume of material which, compared with our own volume, would figure otherwise than as a drop of water beside all the seas.

To describe the Russian Anarchist movement, or such of its curious manifestations as more than once led the late Prince Kropotkin to dissociate himself from its policy, is no part of my purpose ; but at least it may be said that, though the Bolshevists were never averse to availing themselves of the Anarchists' assistance whenever such assistance happened to seem convenient, they, equally, never were averse to treating Anarchist elements with the utmost brutality whenever those elements anywhere made good a footing.

The above-mentioned Anarchist pamphlet also reprints an important telegram which the Central Government dispatched to Rakovsky, then head

[1] See the Dielo of February 16,1921.

of the Ukrainian Council of People's Deputies, with regard to preparations for suppressing Anarchist organisations in Southern Russia. The message, a confidential one, said:

Let all Anarchists within Ukrainian territory, but more especially amongst Makhno's entourage, be placed under surveillance forthwith, in order that there may be prepared against them any evidence—preferably evidence criminal in nature—which may prove useful in the future towards indictment of such persons. But also do you keep both this order and that evidence secret, and do no more than issue instructions in so far as the message, for the present, demands. Only, wherever feasible, let Anarchists be arrested and arraigned at once.

And upon the Crimea followed Siberia [1]: and, upon Siberia, Georgia. Acting by itself alone, the Trans-Caucasian Che-Ka made thousands of arrests, and carried out hundreds of shootings. Relating his impressions of the Bolshevist regime in Tiflis during its first few days of being, a refugee from Batoum told the Roul's correspondent in Constantinople that, during that time :

The town was wholly given up to pillage and rapine. . . . One night a friend of mine saw a huge pile of corpses—300 or so of them—lying in the Cathedral Square. All the house walls around them were bespattered with blood, and evidently a very large number of executions had taken place. In the pile were men and women, were old and young, were military and civilian, were Georgian and Russian, were rich and poor.

The officials most active in the region were the infamous Peters already mentioned, the Artabekov who had ravaged the Northern Caucasus, and the notorious sailor Pankratov—the last-named a man who, after assisting to quell the Astrakhan rising, and distinguishing

[1] At present my store of Siberian data is incomplete, but I shall hope later to complete and produce it.

himself in Siberia, had transferred his energies to Baku, where on the island of Nargen he slaughtered over 100 intellectuals and industrial workers.

Meanwhile, what was happening in the centre of Russia, where civil war had been over for a long time past, and the immediate results of such war had faded ? There happened what took place everywhere else during 1921; there hundreds of persons were being shot either for having participated in some real or invented conspiracy, or for having vented some hasty protest against the Bolshevist tyranny, or because (this happened most often of all) their execution was capable of being presented in the guise of a belated punishment for a real or an invented criminal offence. Of this latter class a good instance is a Pskov trial of a group of chemists, merely for having sold alcohol, with a brutal execution of eight of their number [1]; whilst a trial of some officials of the State Defence Department in Moscow in October led to ten or twelve more shootings ; and other persons were awarded the death sentence for alleged abuses in their work at the Commissariats of Finance and Public Health. Vishniak's book, The Black Year, also records that, taking the month of June alone, tribunals shot, during that period, in Moscow 748 persons, Petrograd 216, Kharkov 418, and Ekaterinodar 815.

As regards the first three months of 1922, figures of Che-Ka exploits are to be gained from the Posledniya Novosty of May 5, which cites an official report for the period, and quotes items of 4300 persons shot, and 114 risings quelled, for the twelve central provinces, added to mass shootings in Yaroslavl, Saratov, Kazan, and Koursk, and to a total of 347 shot in Moscow during the month of January alone. Similarly, the Golos Rossii obtained information from the statistical

[1] The Dielo of March 22.

Exhuming Bolshevists' victims from clay pits at Koursk.

[See page 92.]

branch of the Commissariat of Transport to the effect that during 1921 the "railway courts" shot, on their own responsibility, 1759 victims—passengers and employees alike.

Besides, shootings took place from which every human sentiment would instinctively revolt. An instance is the execution of five lads, out of twenty-seven put on their trial, at Orel.[1]

In Odessa, also, the dispersal of the All-Russian Committee for Assistance of the Starving was followed by the shooting of twelve persons whom the Odessan Izvestia alleged to have been connected with that organisation. And when six persons succeeded in escaping from the concentration camp at Ekaterinburg the director of the "Department of Penal Labour " proceeded to the camp from Moscow, had the ex-officers confined in the camp paraded before him, selected twenty-five, and shot them out of hand " as a warning to the rest."[2]

Again, that autumn sixty-one persons were shot in Petrograd in connection with the so-called " Tagantsev conspiracy," [3] whilst a rising at Kronstadt so alarmed the Bolshevists that they shot sailors in thousands. Also, according to a statement published in the German journal, Frankfurter Zeitung, the naval garrison of Petrograd lost 2500 men between February 28 and March 6. And a few of their number who contrived to escape to Finland reported that the shootings were carried out on the ice of the frozen river before the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. Oranienbaum's quota

[1] Other shootings of the kind took place earlier. In 1919 some Boy Scouts were shot in Moscow, and in 1920 the same fate (for "espionage ") was meted out to the members of a tennis club. Other cases also occurred.

[2] See the Revolutsionnaya Rossia, Nos. 12 and 18.

[3] Two other, but smaller, groups were shot later.

in the same connection, it has been estimated, was 1400, and included amongst its victims six priests who somehow had got mixed up with the affair.[1]

Similarly, a Saratov Social Revolutionary and Men-shevist conspiracy—to be more exact, rebellion—which the excessive taxations in kind had evoked, was followed by local mass arrests and shootings, though, of course, the official communique said that only " twenty-seven " had been shot; and we do not know the real figure— we know only that a large number of hostages selected from amongst school teachers, professional men, and ex-Tsarist officers and officials was seized in anticipation of a peasant rising, and eventually shot in the local gaols [2]; and that in connection with that, or with some other, "conspiracy," a batch of fifty-eight Social Revolutionaries of the Left were executed for " banditism "— in reality for participation in the rising.[3]

Again, a railway workers' rebellion in Ekaterinoslav had, as a sequel, a list of "fifty-one" victims, which means, probably, that the true number was considerably larger. Indeed, we read in Z. U. Arbatov's reminiscences, entitled Ekaterinoslav, 1917-1920,[4] that after 200 workmen had been arrested, and fifty sentenced to execution at once, the rest were, later, and by night, conveyed in two motor-lorries (the date being June 2) to a spot on the river Dnieper where, with a machine-gun trained upon them from behind, the whole were so shot that their bodies fell into the water, to be carried away by the current, and only a few were left stranded on the margin. And later more railway employees were sentenced and executed by the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka at Kharkov. The foregoing details Arbatov had from

[1] See the Posledniya Novosty, No. 281.
[2] See No. 8 of Revolutsionnaya Rossia.
[3] See the Posledniya Novosly of May 13.
[4] See Archives of the Russian Revolution, XII, 182.

Bolshevists' own statements. A minor rising at Kron-stadt was suppressed in the same manner.

At Byisk a " conspiracy " led to 500, or more, arrests and eighteen shootings ; a " conspiracy " (of ex-officers and koulaki [1]) in the Semiriechen district to forty-eight shootings; and a "conspiracy" at Elizabetgrad to shootings of fifty-five out of eighty-five persons arrested.

Next, the period arrived when Cossack refugees began to be compulsorily restored to their homes from overseas. They reached home to find not an amnesty, but punishment, awaiting them. A Cossack named Chouvillo who contrived to escape from Yisk after he had been repatriated thither subsequently informed certain foreign-published Russian journals that, out of a party of 3500 of his comrades, as many as 894 had been shot.[2] This statement may have been exaggerated, but at least no doubt exists that there were frequent shootings of legally or illegally repatriated Cossack officers ; many such cases stand recorded for the year under review (1921). A correspondent of the Parisian Russian National Committee has informed us, in an article entitled " The Return " [3] (an article based upon items which Odessan Bolshevist journals themselves had published), that as soon as the s.s. Reshed Pasha reached Novorossisk from Constantinople during the April of 1921, 30 per cent. of her passenger complement of 2500 were shot, and that the same had been done after a previous trip of hers with 1500.

In our own case the officers and soldiers on board were shot at once ; whilst of the previous party of 1500, 500 were shot at once, and the remainder dispatched to various concentration camps of the north, where certain death awaited them.

[1] Well-to-do peasants—peasant capitalists or factors.
[2] See the Segodnya (" To-day ") of April 25, 1921.
[3] In the Vestnik (" Messenger ") of March, 1923, pp. 28 and 29.

And even a respite from execution in no way guaranteed security against execution in the future. This we learn from a letter as recent as the November or the December of 1923 which was published in No. 16 of the Kasachyi Doumy (" Cossack Opinion "), and says, amongst other things, that no one who landed at Novorossisk at the period of which I am speaking could have failed often to hear the code phrase, "To be set apart for service in Mogilev."[1] So much, then, for the system of deporting the compulsorily repatriated to the interior. Only the innocence of a credulous foreigner could have made Dr. Nansen believe that he found social rights still existent in Soviet Russia, or state, on April 21, 1923, that, " with regard to repatriations of Cossacks from the Balkan States, the Soviet Government is keeping faith in this respect, and fulfilling all undertakings given," seeing that those undertakings had been defined by two clauses saying:

(1) That the Soviet Government binds itself herewith to extend the amnesties of November 3 and November 10 to all Russian refugees repatriated through the good offices of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations; and (2) that the Soviet Government binds itself herewith to afford Mr. John Garvin and other accredited representatives of Dr. Nansen in Russia every facility for holding unhindered converse with repatriated refugees, to the end that such representatives may verify the fact that the Soviet Government is applying the amnesties named to all refugees without exception.

And if Dr. Nansen could add to the above statement the words, "Certainly, two repatriated refugees have been arrested for minor offences, but already delegates from myself are negotiating with the Government with regard to these two persons' fate," his faith in the written word of a Bolshevist and his ignorance of

[1] There is a pun in this, since mogilev also means a tomb.

Russian realities must alike have been great! For how could a private person—even a delegate from the High Commissioner of the League of Nations—control an independent Soviet Government with regard to that Government's refugees, seeing that for such a purpose a State would need to have been formed within a State, and provided with its own secret service ? Besides, the policy of the Soviet Government is a policy capable always of postponing its wreakings of revenge, so that persons may " disappear," may be sent into exile, or thrown into gaol, long after they have been granted official guarantees of immunity.

Is any further proof of the existence of such a policy required ? Proof can be discovered at every turn. A good instance is a case tried before the Military Tribunal of Moscow. During the year 1919 an officer named Chougounov deserted from the Red Army, tout returned to Russia four years later, and was put upon his trial. True, he expressed " whole-hearted repentance," and, the locality whence he had returned being Poland, he had, before returning thence, obtained from the Russo-Ukrainian Mission in that country a licence to return, and a recommendation to the All-Russian Executive Committee that he should be reinvested with civil rights ; yet on May 18 he was arrested, brought before the Military Tribunal of Moscow, and, " in view of his whole-hearted repentance, and of his voluntary return to Russia, and of his class origin " (he was a peasant's son) sentenced only to a term of—ten years' "imprisonment in strict isolation " !

The Years 1922 and 1928.

Certain persons, particularly foreign visitors who have scraped together a superficial acquaintance with Russian

life (M. Herriot is an example of the type), declare that terrorism in Russia is a thing of the past.

Well, even if we suppose that figures issued by the foreign-published Russian press were invariably exaggerated (including the figures said to have been derived from the Bolshevists' Commissariat for Foreign Affairs itself, and stating that 2372 persons were shot during the month of May 1922 alone), the figures, whether exaggerated or not, are still horrifying as indicating the extent to which political life in Russia had become extinct, the country come to resemble a skeleton-strewn field, and all energy to rebel, all will to vent an open protest, fled from an abject, nerveless, supine population. Indeed, I should be only too glad to believe that the figures were exaggerated. Again, according to figures issued by the State Political Department itself, the O.G.P.U., a continuation of the Che-Ka organisation, 262 persons were shot during January and February 1922, and 348 during April, and 164 (including seventeen priests) during the one night of May 7-8, and 187 (at Kharkov) and 209 in Kharkov Province, and 200 in Petrograd, during May in general; even if we suppose that these figures, too, were exaggerated it was at least hypocrisy on Stallin's part when he informed the Muscovite branch of the Communist Party in August of the year named that " we shall have to resort to terrorism," and, in defence of the mass arrests of intellectuals then being carried out, to say :

Before long our enemies will be forcing us back upon Red Terrorism, and compelling us to reply to their activities with such measures as were necessitated during the years 1918 and 1919. So let those enemies remember that we do not fail to keep our promises. Already their experiences during the two years named should have taught them that much. ...It is for those who sympathise with our political

adversaries to dissuade them from going too far, from overstepping permissible bounds of opposition to our policy. For unless they cease from those activities, we shall be forced to resume usage of a weapon which we should never have used at all if we had not seen our warnings disregarded. To our adversaries' stealthy blows we must oppose blows open, stern, directed against every adverse quarter, whether actively or passively operative.

For there was no need for such threats : still vivid before the public memory were executions of churchmen for opposing confiscation of ecclesiastical property— the most dastardly executions that could possibly have been conceived, seeing that they were due merely to the mildest of protests against ecclesiastical spoliation, even as was the case in July last, when the Revolutionary Tribunal of Petrograd tried sixteen members of local religious communities, and condemned eleven of them to death—the condemned including Benjamin, Metropolitan of Petrograd, himself. And to this, and to the earlier case in Moscow, when fifty-four ecclesiastics were tried, and twelve of them sent for execution, there must be added instances in the provinces of Chernigov, Poltava, Smolensk, Archangelsk, Staraya Roussa, Novocherkassk, and Vitebsk, where clergy were shot in batches of from one to four on charges of having protested against despoilment of sacred ornaments.

With these executions for clerical " counter-revolution " went shootings after purely political trials on charges of having belonged to non-existent " counterrevolutionary organisations." And trials of the sort are still going on : as recently as February 22, 1922, the Posledniya Novosty published a striking letter concerning the "liquidations " of some risings in the Ukraine which said : " Such 'liquidations ' constitute, in reality, a war of extermination whose object is to finish off any intellectuals who have survived previous efforts of the

sort." And take the following extract from a letter written by a refugee from Proskurovo during January of that year. It says :

Owing to the almost incredible terrorism which has been rampant here (in Proskurovo) during the past few months, people have been compelled to escape whilst there was yet time. Such intellectuals as remained behind the Bolshevists are already arresting. . . . Koritsky, Chouikov, and my brother have been shot. Our Elder committed suicide just before he was led out to execution. And his wife is a prisoner in the local gaol. . . . Many have been put to death for participating in a " conspiracy." Twenty-three were shot on the 18th last. ... As the victims were being led out to be slaughtered nine of their companions burst through the gaol doors, and escaped. I, too, succeeded in doing that when my turn came. This was during the fourth series of arrests. . . . How you may be thankful that you have got clear of Proskurovo ! At least you have escaped the spectacle of wives and mothers and children waiting outside the Che-Ka building on execution days ! . . . None of the persons executed had had anything to do with political agitation at all. Most of them had merely agreed with the " Ukraine Movement." They fell victims to evidence concocted by the Che-Ka itself. In fact, the Che-Ka has concocted the whole of this " Proskurovo conspiracy" on the usual degraded lines which Che-Kas affect.

And for news of similar terrorist orgies in other quarters of the Ukraine we need but scan the files of the Golos Rossii, or of the Posledniya Novosty, for 1922, when we shall see there excerpts from the Bolshevist press which tell of repeated executions of members of Savinkov's and Pethura's followings— of 12 members in Kharkov, of 25 in Odessa, of 55 in Nikolaevsk, of several in Minsk, of 8 in Gomel, of 10 in the Northern Caucasus, of 10 in Pavlograd, of 10 in Semipalatinsk Province (according to some sources, of 5), of 12 in Simbirsk Province (out of 42 found to

be in possession of Antonov's proclamations), of 68 in Maikop (amongst them women and young boys— all shot " to intimidate their fellow-bandits, since with the return of spring the rebels are losing their sense of fear "), of 13 (from amongst a group known as the Berdiansk Constitutional-Revolutionary Association) in Melitopol, and of 13 (students, these) in Kharkov. Then we must add to these the shooting of the General Staff of the Don Army—a shooting which became the more known because it included the shooting also of two Communists ; the trial of the Nobel employees ; the trials of repatriated emigres; the execution of Shishkin, the Social Revolutionary, by the Muscovite Revolutionary Tribunal for refusing to testify before that court, and dubbing it " a mere organ of Bolshevist revenge"; the murder of Colonel Peshkourov of Yaroslavl as a participator in the Savinkov rising of 1918 ; the execution of 13 officers at Krasnoyarsk ; the trial of the Karelian rebels ; an execution of 148 Kievan Cossacks for mutiny; the arrest of 260 sailors after a naval conspiracy at Odessa ; and a batch of executions at Odessa for a local strike.[1]

From Riga, on August 5, a correspondent of the Golos wrote :

During the past week both the O.G.P.U. and the revolutionary tribunals have been actively engaged in carrying out mass arrests and passing death sentences. At Petrograd ten persons have been condemned to death by the local revolutionary tribunal. In Esthonia a trial has been held of the Esthonian Wholesale-Control Committee. At Saratov the local tribunal has condemned two social revolutionaries for stirring up a peasant rebellion in the Volsk district. And on July 29 the tribunal of Voronezh put to death a social revolutionary named Sharnov, and on the 28th passed death sentences upon eighteen officers previously captured in

[1] See the Posledniya Novosty, No. 729.

Northern Caucasia and the Trans-Caucasian and Don regions The tribunal's sentences were carried out in the concentration camp at Archangel, whither the officers had been sent at the end of 1920, or early in 1921. Amongst the victims were General Mouraviev (aged over seventy), Colonel Gandurin, and others.

Then there were cases which seem to have had, not a political, but some other basis : a shooting of three railwaymen at Kiev ; a shooting of forty persons at Saratov for having looted provisions destined for the famine-stricken areas ; a shooting of six railwaymen at Novocherkassk for theft; and some wholesale massacres at Tsaritsin, Vladimir, Petrograd, and elsewhere. Of course, not all of those condemned may actually have been put to death—indeed, we know that sometimes they were not; but also we know that journalistic news of death sentences reached the foreign press only as regards a tithe of those sentences, and that sometimes the Bolshevist press omitted any details of them at all. Thus the Posledniya Novosty once quoted from that press : " Shootings of persons convicted of accepting bribes have been taking place in large numbers," and I myself can recall a special " week for combating bribery " (it was during my last few days in Russia, early in the October of 1922), and the fact that on the day of my departure I found the Brest railway station all plastered over with posters announcing the " week," and that only subsequently I learnt that the " week's " plans had been planned on a scale large enough to include hundreds, and even thousands, of arrests of railwaymen !

Z. U. Arbatov, who escaped from Russia by way of Minsk, has given us a vivid sketch of the city's condition. He writes [1]:

[1] In Archives of the Russian Revolution, XII, 145.

Affixed with tin-tacks to the wall of a carpenter's shop we saw a list of names headed " Persons of the sort whom the Che-Ka punishes." But just as my eye caught the figure " 46 " my companion dragged me away, and said hurriedly, " Oh, that is nothing. We have long been used to it. They put up a new list every day, and if one is seen reading it one runs the risk of being taken before the Che-Ka. You see, the saying is that no one would want to read it who had not got ' enemies of the Soviet Power' amongst one's friends, since otherwise it wouldn't be interesting enough. They shoot dozens daily."

As regards the year 1923, let me first cite a report issued by the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal. The report says that between the January and the March of the year in question the tribunal shot forty persons, and, during the May of that year, a hundred. Could anything be more eloquent ? And from the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Che-Ka we have it that during the same period the State Political Department, the O.G.P.U., executed 826 persons "independently " —that is to say, illegally, in that only 519 of the 826 had been political offenders. At the same time it should be stated that later these findings led to three chiefs of branches of the O.G.P.U., fourteen " people's prosecutors," and certain other officials being dismissed. Again, from official Soviet publications which I was able to procure after I had left Russia, and from various correspondents of European journals, we glean items of the mass and individual executions of the year in question which enable us to divide the victims into the usual categories. Hence, first of all come executions for " counter-revolution." A good example is the murder of the prelate Boutkievitz, which so shocked the whole civilised world that the reader will have no difficulty in remembering it. And then there come executions for having printed unauthorised political

pamphlets. And then there come cases termed in the official reports " Details," which were old affairs raked up after lapses of years—the shooting of a Savinkov agent named Sverzhevsky for planning to assassinate Lenin ; the shootings of three and six members of the Union for Defence of Liberty and the Fatherland ; the execution of M. F. Zhilinsky, a Muscovite member of a Savinkov organisation [1] ; the shooting of three officers of the " Olonetz Sharpshooters Division " for having caused that division to surrender to the British in 1919 ; the execution of thirty-three members of a counter-revolutionary organisation active at Niko-laevsko-Neznamovsk ; the shooting of thirteen members of a Constitutional-Revolutionary organisation at Kiev ; the trial of forty-four persons at Semipalatinsk, twelve of whom were sentenced to death ; the shooting at Perm of two Kolchak officers (Drizdov and Timo theiev); the shooting at Omsk of Kolchak's director of intelligence, Pospielov, an ex-Tsarist Crown Counsel— though previously he had been granted an " amnesty " ; the shooting at Semipalatinsk of the Kolchak Government's Chief Justice; the shooting in Moscow of Pravdin; the execution of Ishmourzin (ex-Commissary for the Bashkir Republic) for seceding to Kolchak; the trial, in Moscow, of Piestchikov, Okoulov, and Metkevich, ex-officers of Denikin's army, on a charge of " espionage " ; the shooting, in Moscow, of Serdin-kov, late Vice-Commandant of Omsk; at Ekaterino-slav, of 28 " rebels " ; at Podolsk, of 26 Petlura men (including a sergeant named Pogoutsky); in Volhynia, of 64 persons out of 340 condemned—the rest having their sentences remitted ; in the Caucasus, of 9 members of a " rebel " group operative during 1923 ; in White

[1] As announced by the Warsaw journal Za Svobodou (" For Freedom "), to which the deceased had been a contributor.

Russia (where a correspondent reported " a great increase of terrorism "), of 10 " rebels "; in Chita, of a Colonel Ernelich and 6 confederates ; in Rostov, of 5 persons ; and everywhere of countless " bandits "— of 15 in Odessa, of 15 and 17 in Petrograd (including a number of women who had refused to betray their lovers), of 9 in Moscow, of 6 in Ekaterinoslav, of 5 in Berdichev, and of 3 in Archangel, whilst in Kharkov also 78 " bandit'" trials were held, and in only a few instances the subsequent death sentences commuted to imprisonment " because of the accused's proletarian origin," or " in recognition of services rendered to the Revolution and the Proletariat." And, finally, we have it from a correspondent of the Rousskaya Gazeta (" The Russian Gazette") in Odessa that 16 local "bandits " were sentenced to death for " acts of terrorism against Communists." Yet the term " banditism " should be viewed with great caution. An instance is seen in the fact that the Izvestia once wrote :

Last December the case of Soloviev's White bandit supporters was brought before the provincial court of Enisey. Of the 106 persons arraigned, nine were condemned to death, with five who had forged railway tickets, some who had passed counterfeit money, and the like.

Also, we must remember the category of persons executed for "economic counter-revolution." Instances are the manager of the Turkhestan Tobacco Company (for "negligence"), four forest wardens in Tomsk Province, three engineers employed by a concern called the Union Works, a man employed by the Principal Remount Depot (Topilsky, an ex-Social Revolutionary), some workers in the employ of the State Trading and Naval Stores Departments, an engineer named Verkhovsky and six others in Petrograd, a merchant trader of the Sukharev Market in Petrograd,

four workmen for " sabotage," and a batch of Communist traders for " unconscionable speculation in currency." Also there was the affair of the Vladimirsky Club, together with executions for offences similar to the offence then alleged. And during the same year there occurred several cases of senseless, gratuitous official revenge for offences committed several years previously. Instances are the shooting of Lieutenant Stavraky for having helped to quell a mutiny in the Black Sea Fleet during 1905, the execution of seventy-six repatriated men of Wrangel's Army, and the shooting of General Petrenko after returning home from Prince Island in reliance upon an " amnesty." Again, my portfolio contains sundry items relating to offences connected with official duties—items relating to the shooting, in Moscow, of eleven employees of the Central Housing Department; to the trial, at Pskov, of one Porkhov and two other employees of the local revenue office ; to a trial of employees of the Viatka educational department for acceptance of bribes; to trials of members of local Che-Kas and revolutionary tribunals for lapses of official duty (a perfect wave of " official duty " trials seems to have swept over Russia); to the trial of a member of the Archangel revolutionary tribunal; and to a trial of the head of the Doubosarsky (Tsaritsin) criminal investigation department—the two last for having tortured victims before shooting them.

And what of the many executions of the year which were never reported at all ? That such executions took place I am certain. For example, no journal ever reported the shooting of nineteen Savinkov supporters during the May of 1923, though I possess well-founded information that it took place, and that, of the nineteen then executed, thirteen had had no connection whatsoever with the offence alleged against

them. And it was only when Sinovary was giving evidence before the tribunal at Lausanne that the world first learnt that P. I. Smirnov had been arrested during the previous April in connection with the Savinkov affair, and shot in Petrograd during the following January.

And what of Georgia, now supposed to have become a Communist State ? The same as everywhere else: the usual quellings of the usual risings. In this connection we learn best of local conditions from certain Bolshevist press accounts of the rebellion and the suppression of 1922. Those accounts include an order to the inhabitants which, though by no means new in its contents, is at least instructive.

All inhabitants (the Order said) must report to the authorities and representatives of the Red Army both the Christian and the family names of any bandit who is known to them, and of any person who is harbouring such a bandit, with the whereabouts of any person soever who is hostile to the Soviet Power.

These Georgian risings were succeeded by Georgian "conspiracies" : and journals of the day contain resultant lists of names of from fifteen to ninety-one persons shot, with the executed described, in every case, as former princes or aristocrats or generals who had turned "bandit," whereas, as a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority of them had belonged to the plain Socialist or Democrat intelligentsii where they had not been merely rural schoolmasters, or co-operative employees, or industrial workers, or peasants, and the like,[1] or known to all just as members of the Georgian Social Democratic Party.[1]

On July 5, 1923, the Central Committee of the Party

[1] See the Dni of March 13, 1923, and No. 5 of the Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik, 1923.

just named published an address to the Central Committee of the local Communist Party and the local Soviet of People's Commissaries. The address said :

Since November and December last large numbers of Socialist working people and peasants have been perishing at your executioners' hands, and thousands of others finding themselves forced to flee for refuge to the wilds, lest they find themselves expelled from Georgia, or thrown into prison. And even this, it would appear, has not sufficed you, for you are torturing incarcerated comrades in your dungeons, and causing them such moral and physical suffering as in not a few cases has deprived them of reason, and, in others, crippled them for life where it has not killed them outright. From 700 to 800 persons are lying in your Che-Ka dungeons, or in the Metekhsky Fortress, at this moment.[1]

The Year 1924

This year, too, must be begun with similar items—with, first of all, the case of the " spy " Dziubenko, an ex-lieutenant-colonel of Kolchak's army who, brought before the military division of the Supreme Court in Moscow, was sentenced to death and sequestration of his property. Subsequently the Izvestia reported: "Dziubenko had his sentence carried out within the legal period." [2] Then there is the case of the " spy " Khrousevich, an ex-instructor attached to the Kronstadt Artillery School, upon whom the same tribunal similarly passed sentence of death.[3] And from a correspondent of the Dni we learn of a shooting of some workmen merely for having gone on strike,[4] and of a session of the Verkhne-Tagilsky " district circuit section of the provincial court " at which five unemployed and another

[1] See the Sotsialistichesky Vestnik, No. 15.
[2] See the Izvestia of February 27.
[3] See the Izvestia of February 29.
[4] See the Dni of January 24, No. 395.

man were sentenced to death for having, during January, " promoted disturbances in factories, and cessations from industrial work." All these sentences were duly carried out, and from a pamphlet published by the Georgian Labour Group in February we learn that in Baku, for the same offence, eight Russian and three Georgian workmen were executed by the Transcau-casian branch of the O.G.P.U.—the pamphlet citing as authority for its statement a letter sent to the Dni by a Muscovite correspondent.[1]

Hence during this year we find ourselves in the presence of the usual orgy of death sentences. In particular, the O.G.P.U. staged a great political trial in Kiev, the pretext for which was an allegation that the O.G.P.U. had discovered in Kiev a great counter-revolutionary organisation styled " The Kievan Centre of Action."

The present shootings are endless [wrote a refugee to the Novoye Vremya (" The New Times ")], with, as the only difference, the fact that things now are done more circumspectly than formerly was the case. For example, an inhabitant of Tambov will be sent to be executed in Saratov, and a Saratovian elsewhere, and so forth, so that all tracks may be covered up, and, on a given person disappearing, no one may be able to find him again.[2]

I can vouch that the statement embodies a fact.

Attempts have been made to determine totals. But what use is that, seeing that probably the black pall under which the sanguinary events of latter-day Russian life have lain concealed these five years past will never be lifted, and that to the end history will have to stand vainly outside the locked doors which admit to the Red Statistical Chamber ? In the White Sea, it is said, fisher-

[1] See the Dni of March 4.
[2] See the Novoye Vremya of August 3, 1923.

men's nets still keep dragging up corpses of Solovetski monks, lashed wrist to wrist with barbed wire.[1]

However, once a correspondent of the Roul, a writer named Egeny Komnin, did essay to compile a table of totals,[2] and below I will give the conclusions of his attempt accurately to estimate them.

By the winter of 1920 [he wrote] the number of provinces included within the R.S.F.S.R. was fifty-two, and they had fifty-two Che-Kas, and fifty-two special branches, and fifty-two provincial revolutionary tribunals. And then there existed all the swarm of regional-transport Che-Kas, railway tribunals, tribunals of " internal defence" (the " Internal Service Force "), and circuit sessional courts— these last being commissions periodically sent from the centre to supervise local mass shootings. And there were the special branches and special tribunals attached to the several armies (which, again, numbered sixteen), and the special branches and tribunals attached to the several divisions of those armies. Hence, in all, we may assume that there existed fully a thousand torture chambers—or, if we take into account also the activities of the district Che-Kas at that period, more than a thousand; considerably more. And later, as the R.S.F.S.R. still further increased the number of its provinces (Siberia and the Crimea and the Far East becoming overrun), that increase must have been accompanied by an increase in the number of the torture chambers. Whence, taking the Bolshevists' own totals for 1920 (though during that year no real decrease of terrorism set in— merely it was that acts perpetrated by terrorism began to be reported less frequently), we can fix upon a certain definite figure for the daily average of killing per torture centre, and see thence that the curve of shootings rose from one to fifty as regards the larger centres, and from one to one hundred as regards regions in recent occupation by the Red Army. And since terroristic outbursts always were periodical in their outbreaking and their decreasing, a modest estimate of the average will work out at five persons per diem

[1] See "Reminiscences of Sub-Lieutenant Hefter," in Archives of the Russian Revolution, X, 118.

[2] See the Roul of August 3, 1923.

per torture centre, or, if multiplied by 1000 (the total number of torture centres), at 5000 persons per diem, or 2,500,000 per annum for the country as a whole. And to think that for six years past, or more, this Medusa's Head has been waving over the ashes of our fatherland !

Che-Kas are said also to have appointed special officials, " corpse numberers," for the purpose of keeping tally of the dead. The fact, surely, speaks for itself ? [1]

[1] In an at once lucid and accurate series of articles on Russia, published in the Edinburgh Scotsman, Professor Sarolea gives the following table of classified totals :

" Bishops, 28 ; ecclesiastics, 1219 ; professors and teachers, 6000 ; medical men, 9000 ; naval and military officers, 54,000 ; naval and military men of the ranks, 260,000; police officials, 70,000 ; intellectuals and members of the professional classes, 355,250 ; industrial workers, 193,290 ; peasants, 815,000."

CHAPTER IV

THE CIVIL WAR

The truth was dragged from them by torture under their finger-nails ; explosives were rammed down their throats ; they had the flesh of their shoulders cut into the form of shoulder-straps and stripes ; they were converted into unicorned devils. ... To think of the lies that must have been employed, during those years of damnation, to drive mad, and to slaughter, a whole army, a whole realm, a whole people!—MAXIMILIAN VOLOSHIN.

IN its general report on Bolshevist activities during the years 1918 and 1919 the Denikin Commission has stated that the number of victims during the two years totalled 1,700,000; and, seeing that the materials collected by that Commission have not yet been fully, or anything like fully, examined, and I myself have confined my figures exclusively to deaths resultant from " legal " or "administrative" action, to deaths following upon sentence passed directly by a revolutionary authority, there can be little doubt that the actual total of the Terror's victims has been incomparably larger. This the reader will have seen for himself when I touched upon the quellings of rebellions. The peculiar difficulty lies in distinguishing between excesses born of civil war, or revolutionary " restorations of order " of the kind carried out by such forces as the detachments of brutish sailors and female " punitives " whom the ex-gaol bird Maroussia led to Essentouky during the March of 1918, and wreakings of Red Terrorism on a preconceived plan. For upon the heels of an advancing Bolshevist force there

never failed to follow a wreaking of vengeance equally upon a defenceless foe and upon an innocent civilian population, and a formation of a military Che-Ka, since the name of an agency of massacre does not matter where massacre is concerned.

I should have been glad to spare the reader's feelings in this regard. Yet, for all that, I must bring to his notice a few instances of what I mean, even if in such instances I am not presenting absolutely the worst examples of the animal and human fury which they illustrate.

I will begin with " Case No. 40," taken from the Denikin materials—the report of an inquiry held into Bolshevist activity in Taganrog between January 20 and April 17, 1918. Says the report:

On the night of January 18 the Bolshevists of Sivers' Army entered, and set to work in the town of Taganrog. And on the 20th the cadets of the Military School concluded with them an armistice—they surrendered on condition that they should be allowed to leave the town without hindrance. But the Bolshevists did not observe the agreement. On the contrary, they began, that very same day, an exceptionally cruel series of executions by seizing both officers and cadets and all others who had in any capacity acted against them, and either shooting them in the street as soon as captured, or sending them to one or another of the factories to be shot. Also, for several days and nights they carried out house-to-house searches in every quarter of the town, that they might thoroughly round up the " counterrevolutionaries," and showed no consideration even for the wounded and sick, but penetrated into the hospitals, dragged thence all wounded officers or cadets whom they found there, and shot them forthwith in the street. Nor did the mere deaths of these men satisfy the Bolshevist assailants. The latter also made sport both of the dying and of the dead. Particularly brutal was the murder of the Adjutant of the Military School, a staff-captain who had been seriously wounded. For some of the pro-Bolshevist nurses of the

hospital took the wounded officer by the arms and legs and dashed him to and fro against a wall until he was dead. But in most cases such " counter-revolutionaries" were removed to a metal or a tanning factory for execution— most of all to the Baltic Works, where they were killed in fashions so bestial as to lead even some of the pro-Bolshevist factory hands to stand appalled at the deeds, and to voice protests against them. For example, in a metal factory some Red Guards bound the arms and legs of a batch of fifty cadets so as to bend the victims' bodies double, and threw them, bound, into the flames of the blast furnaces. And later the victims' remains were found on the refuse heaps outside—fused with the slag. In addition, mass shootings and executions by other means took place in the factory compounds. Some of the corpses subsequently found there were too disfigured even to be identifiable. And there they lay (the relatives being forbidden to remove them) until, in some cases, dogs and swine dragged them away into the open country, and devoured them. Only when the Bolshevists had been expelled from the Taganrog district were police able to exhume some of the corpses, and have them examined, and reported upon, by medical experts. Subsequently an assistant in the task of exhumation deposed before us that beyond a doubt some of these victims of the Bolshevist Terror had been subjected to agonising tortures before final dispatch. And so remarkable was the uncalled-for cruelty with which some of those unfortunates must have been slaughtered as to afford a vivid illustration of the lengths to which class hatred and human brutality will run. For on some of the corpses were not only wounds of the kind which rifle fire ordinarily causes, but also wholesale cuts and stab wounds, obviously inflicted before death. And sometimes the number of such wounds was so large as to show that the victim had literally been hacked to death, whilst in other cases the head lay shattered, and in others the head had been transformed into an almost shapeless mass in which the last trace of the facial contours lay lost. Lastly, there were corpses whence the limbs and ears had been cut off, and yet others which still had surgical dressings upon them—clear proof that it was from hospitals and infirmaries that the victims had been dragged to their deaths.

Descriptions of Bolshevist advances and massacres during the March and the April of 1918 are similar. In the Kuban district not a single stanitza (Cossack village) occupied by the Bolshevists' Don Army failed to pay a full toll of victims. This was particularly the case with the stanitza of Ladishen, where seventy-four officers and three women were hacked to pieces. And in Ekaterinodar, again, wounded men were chopped to fragments with hatchets, and others had their eyes gouged out. And even as brutally were forty-three officers slaughtered at Novocherkassk. Naturally, such massacres provoked rebellions ; and of course there followed upon the rebellions reprisals. In his book, Notes on the Russian Turmoil (Vol. III, p. 153), Denikin remarks : " The history of these Cossack risings is as tragic as it is uniform." To give an example : in some villages in the district of Labin, which rebelled in June, 770 of the inhabitants were executed by the Bolshevists over and above those who had fallen in the actual fighting. Scores of such appalling and inhuman massacres could be cited.

And similar scenes were witnessed in Sebastopol, Yalta, Aloushta, Simferopol, Theodosia, and other towns of the Crimea. In " Case No. 56 " we find related the story of the so-called " Saint Bartholomew's Eve " which was perpetrated in Eupatoria on January 14, when, on the Red Army reaching the town, there began such mass arrestings of officers and the well-to-do and all who were reputed to be "counter-revolutionaries" that within three or four days over 800 persons were lying in Bolshevist places of confinement. And some of the executions there we find described as follows :

The condemned were led forth on to the upper deck (the scene was aboard of the s.s. Roumania, an auxiliary cruiser), and made sport of, and then shot and flung into the water. Also, a few were thrown into the water alive,

with their arms tied at the elbows and the wrists, and twisted backward, or else with their legs tied, or else with their heads wrenched backward with cords, and tied to their arms and legs, or else with gun-wheels lashed to the legs. . . . And on another day forty-six of the captured officers were lined up beside the bulwarks of the transport Truvor, and, after they had had their arms bound, kicked, one by one, into the sea by a sailor, so that all were drowned. And these slaughterings the relatives and wives and children of the slaughtered had to witness as they stood weeping ashore, and beseeching mercy for their kinsmen. As for the sailors, they only laughed. The most terrible incident of all was the death of Staff-Captain Novatsky, the officer accused by the sailors of having led the Eupatoria rising. Though already he was seriously wounded, the Bolshevists restored him to consciousness, and flung him into the cruiser's furnace. And many other executions took place on board the Truvor. Before each such execution on that vessel (the details had been arranged beforehand by the local " trial commission ") sailors were dispatched to the open hatchway to call aloud the name of the next victim; and upon that the man summoned was surrounded with an escort, and marched through other armed Red Guards to the precise spot of execution, where armed sailors took him over, removed from him all his garments, fettered his arms and legs, laid him flat upon the deck of the ship, cut off his ears, nose, lips, generative organ, and (though this last only in certain cases) arms, and, finally, threw him into the sea: after which they washed down the deck to remove the traces, and turned to the next item in their filthy work. All the night was taken up with that work, for each execution occupied from fifteen to twenty minutes. And whenever the victims' terrible cries and moans threatened to become audible to the remaining prisoners in the hold, the cries were drowned by starting the vessel's engines, and so leading the prisoners to think that the vessel was leaving the harbour. In all, during those three days January 15, 16, and 17, the transport Truvor and the cruiser Roumania saw drowned, or otherwise done to death, no fewer than 300 officers. And later a Bolshevist sailor named Koulikov stated to a meeting of his comrades that he had thrown sixty victims into the sea with his own hand.

Again, when some thirty or forty persons disappeared from the town during the night of March 1, it was found later that they had been taken to a spot on the seashore five versts away, and there shot with explosive bullets. Moreover, it was found that, before being shot, they must have been lined up before a huge open grave, and then stabbed with bayonets and slashed at with swords. Also, it came out that in many cases a man had not been killed outright when he was shot, but had merely fallen wounded and unconscious, and, in that condition, been buried with the rest; and that once when the executioners had been dragging a fallen man to the graveside by his legs he had suddenly recovered consciousness, regained his feet, and run for his life—whereupon, before he had covered more than twenty sazheni, a second bullet had laid him low.

Again we find written in Krishevsky's reminiscences :

When Bolshevist rule was established in the Crimea it was established in the most bloodthirsty, cruel, and ruffianly forms possible, as a rule based solely upon crude, tyrannical local authority. And whole rivers of blood began to flow in the towns, and Bolshevist sailors to rage everywhere, and robberies to occur, until there had become formed a general, permanent atmosphere of plunder and pillage of the citizens.

And to this Krishevsky adds a description of shootings of eighty officers in Yalta, of sixty in Theodosia, of 100 (with sixty ordinary citizens) in the prison yard at Simferopol, and so forth. Then he continues :

During the same February Sebastopol saw a second massacre of officers, but this time a massacre so well organised that the victims were slaughtered according to a regular schedule. And not only were naval officers killed on this occasion, but also all officers, and likewise many prominent citizens. So that, in all, the victims totalled something like 800 persons.

We know, too, that these victims were done to death in the foulest fashion, after first having had their eyes

burnt out. And the Tartar population of the Crimea similarly perished in hundreds, for the Bolshevists knew that that population had no liking for the Bolshevist regime. " To establish the number of victims with any precision is impossible "— thus ran the Denikin Commission's report with regard to the Bolshevists' doings in Stavropol between January 1 and June 18, 1918. "As a matter of fact, people were shot with no previous examination or trial, but solely on the strength of verbal orders issued by town commandants, or by leaders of the Red Guard detachments." Further confirmation of which is to be found in certain reminiscences written by B. M. Krasnov, ex-procurator of the district on behalf of the Provisional Government, and published by J, V. Hessen in Archives of the Revolution: in which reminiscences we read of precisely similar deeds, and also of outrages committed upon Kalmik women and children, and of cuttings off of victims' ears, and of wholesale rapings and torturings of the pupils of a high school for girls.[1]

The materials collected by the Denikin Commission portray also things done in Kharkov and Poltava and other towns of the region. Here, again, we find ourselves confronted with every sort of outrage, and read of "corpses with hands chopped off," "bones broken in half," " heads wrenched from the trunk," " jawbones shattered," or " generative organs missing." For every common grave yielded dozens of such bodies, and there was included amongst them that of the seventy-five year old Archbishop Rodion, who had been scalped before death.

And whenever advances or retreats of the Bolshevists during the civil war brought them to a place for the second time they took care that that second visit of theirs was

[1] See Archives of the Revolution, VII, 164.

even more terrible than the first, and marked by orgies no longer unpremeditated and elemental, but organised and systematised into a regular wreaking of brutish revenge. For example, let us take a description of the sanguinary scenes witnessed in Armavir when, in 1918, the Kuban Terror was drawing to its close. A significant feature is the fact that in this case revenge ceased to be directed exclusively against Russians, for the Denikin Commission has reported:

Earlier, in July, when General Borovsky's division had entered Armavir, the Armenian population of the place had welcomed the General's troops with bread and salt, and borne the whole expense of burial of the officers who had fallen during the advance; but now, when strategical considerations compelled General Borovsky to leave the town, and the Bolshevists returned, mass executions at once became the rule. The first to be hacked to death were 400 Armenian refugees from Persia who had pitched for themselves a camp beside the railway line. And their women and children were slaughtered with the men. And, that done, the executioners turned their attention to the town itself. Over 500 peaceable citizens were either bayoneted or sabred or shot in the town's buildings, streets, and squares ; whilst Ibn Bok, the Persian Consul, also was hacked to death, and, the Bolshevists having by this time forced their way into the courtyard of the Consulate, 310 Persian subjects who had fled thither for refuge and protection were massacred with machine-gun fire.

Also, the remarkable book Seventy-four Days of Bolshevist Rule, written by A. Lokerman, and published in Rostov during 1918, gives us a description of like events in Rostov, and, referring to the local mass shootings in general, and to the massacres of hospital patients in particular, says :

After being divested of their clothing at Sivers' headquarters (save that a few were allowed to retain their trousers and boots, and a few even their shirts as well, since those

garments could, of course, be removed after execution), the prisoners, men naked and barefooted, were, in this twentieth century, marched along a snow-covered street to the churchyard, and shot. And though most of them died praying and crossing themselves, it need hardly be said that such concessions to "bourgeois prejudice" as a blindfolding of the prisoners, or a permitting of a priest to be present, were ignored.

Moreover, boys of fourteen and sixteen, including high school lads and students of the local training college, were shot for having enlisted in the Volunteer Army : Sivers' headquarters had peremptorily ordered the killing of every ex-member of that Army, regardless of whether or not the victim had taken any real part in the Army's activities, or of his age. Again, persons who set foot outside a dwelling after eight o'clock at night were shot— shot without delay; the patrol catching them in the deed at once carried them off to the nearest secluded spot, and made an end of the business. Another feature of the affair was that shootings were carried out against the walls of the local hippodrome, where everyone could view the spectacle, or against a railway embankment— and in both cases in broad daylight. And not infrequently the corpses were subsequently mutilated to the point of becoming unrecognisable. And of course the executions were accompanied with such catch cries as " Death to the bourgeoisie ! " and " Death to the capitalists ! " even though obviously the vast majority of the victims had had no sort of connection either with capitalists or capital, but were secondary school students, and alumni of the local university, and representatives of the professions. Of course, also, the latter circumstance might make the affair seem, at first sight, to have been a massacre of intellectuals alone ; but as a matter of fact the slaughtered were drawn from every class, but, above all, from the peasantry. In 1918, before their withdrawal from

the district, the Bolshevists capped these revolting atrocities with a retreat as merciless in its progress as the advance had been ; so that when, for example, they abandoned Sarapol, and found the task of evacuating the prisoners from the local gaol to be one of some difficulty, they effected a speedy clearance by at once shooting the whole of the gaol's inmates.[1] Mr. Alston confirmed this by writing to Lord Curzon (on February 11, 1919): " One of the Bolshevist leaders stated publicly that, if the Bolshevists should be obliged to leave the town, they would first massacre a thousand of the local inhabitants." [2]

The same British White Book has given us some interesting information concerning certain features of the civil war in North-Eastern Russia in 1918 and 1919. Sir Charles Eliot then wrote to Lord Curzon :

Usually victims were shot, but also they were either drowned or sabred. As regards Perm and Kungur, victims were massacred at the rate of thirty or forty or sixty at a time ; whilst in many cases these massacres were preceded with torturings and other outrageous acts. For example, at Omsk some labourers were first flogged and beaten with butt-ends of rifles and pieces of iron, to make them give evidence ; and often enough such victims have had to dig their own graves before death, or to stand with their faces to a wall whilst their executioners fired shots round and about their ears, and only after a considerable time fired to kill. I have been told this by persons actually respited from such massacres.[3]

General Knox wrote to the British War Office :

At Blagoveschensk we found officers and men of Tor-bolov's detachment who had had gramophone needles thrust under their finger-nails, and their eyes gouged out,

[1] See The Twelve Condemned, p. 21.
[2] British Parliamentary Paper, Reports on Bolshevist Russia, Abridged Edition, Russia, No. 1, pp. 42 and 54.
[3] See the already quoted British Parliamentary Paper, p. 53.

and iron naif-marks on the flesh where the shoulder-straps had been, so that the bodies, frozen as stiff as statues, made a spectacle truly hideous to look upon ! . . . Removed to Blagoveschensk, the victims had nevertheless been slaughtered at Metzanovaya.[1]

Below follows a report sent to Lord (then Mr.) Balfour by Mr. Alston on January 18, 1919, on the basis of statements made by the then Czech Charge-d'Affaires, and with, for subject, certain remarkable events at Kiev.

Even the ferocious behaviour of the Turks in Armenia pales before what the Bolshevists are doing in Russia. . . .
During the July fighting in the Usuri district a Dr. T--------- found bodies of Czech soldiers mutilated to the frightful extent of having had generative organs cut off, heads cleft open, faces slashed, eyes gouged out, or tongues extracted. Moreover, it has been stated by Dr. Girsa, the Czech National Council's local representative, and by his assistant, that a year ago when the Bolshevists captured Kiev and shot several hundred officers, these officers were haled from their quarters, and, in spite of the terrible coldness of the weather, stripped to the skin except for their caps, bundled into carts and motor-lorries, and forced to stand naked for hours in the piercing frost, until their Bolshevist executioners should receive word to shoot them either individually or in groups as best suited an individual executioner's fancy. Dr. Girsa then was surgeon in Civilian Hospital No. 12, and, from the first, owing to the ruthless way in which the Bolshevists attacked all officers and members of the educated classes, this hospital became terribly overcrowded with wounded men. And these had to be hidden in closets lest the Bolshevists should drag them out into the street, and shoot them out of hand. Even as it was, many of them were dragged out, and massacred without mercy—officers in some cases suffering from abdominal wounds or broken limbs or other such injuries. Also, Dr. Girsa has told us that later people saw bodies of officers being eaten by dogs

[1] In a diary compiled by A. Boudberg, and included in Archives of the Russian Revolution, we find the total of slain at Blagoveschensk given as 1500.

where they lay, and that his assistant's wife beheld a whole carload of frozen bodies being driven to a dumping-place outside the town. Everywhere people were taken from their homes in the middle of the night, and hospital beds emptied, and patients in a gravely serious condition slaughtered, and men shot without trial.[1]

In the same fashion Mr. Alston wrote to Mr. Balfour on January 14, 1919:

The number of brutally murdered, but innocent, civilians in this town has run to hundreds, whilst officers who have been taken prisoner by the Bolshevists have had their shoulder straps nailed to their shoulders, and young girls been raped, and civilian bodies found with the eyes scooped out and the noses missing. At Perm twenty-five priests have been shot. Also, Bishop Andronik has been buried alive. I have been promised the totals of killed and other details later.

Hence, no matter whence it comes, or to what locality it relates, our information shows a uniform monotony of horror. Esthonia, Latvia, Azerbaijan—none were an exception to the rule. And German State Papers have said the same of Valk, Dorpat, Wesenburg, and elsewhere in that region ; and the same with the British White Book—uniformly one reads, in these publications, of hundreds of persons with eyes gouged out, and the like. Also, the author of some reminiscences dealing with the rebellion in Transcaucasia has stated that, during an insurrection in Elizabetpol in 1920, 40,000 Mohammedans perished at the Bolshevists' hands.[2]

Only by noting facts of the sort can we grasp the full extent of the phenomenon known to us as " The Red Terror," for they appeared wherever civil war broke out. And the deeds which those facts represent were

[1] From reports and other documents contained in the State Papers of Czecho-Slovakia, 1919, Vol. LIII.

[2] See Archives of the Russian Revolution, IX, 190.

not deeds done in the heat of conflict, in the moment when the animal passions of humanity are most easily-aroused, nor yet deeds which can be put aside with the comment either that they were "excesses of warfare," or that they were perpetrated only by Chinese executioners, or by the " International Contingents " which became exceptionally notorious for their cruelty, and led Vershimir to make the typical comment that the " International Battalion " of Kharkov " committed atrocities exceeding even what we know as horrible." [1] No; so far from the Bolshevists' excesses being deeds born of a momentary impulse, they were deeds born of a regular system of cruelty, of a settled policy of preconceived intent. And a proof of this is that, shortly before the date of the attempt upon Lenin's life, Latzis evolved, and published in the Izvestia (he did so on August 28, 1918), " new regulations for civil war" which were to replace the old code evolved of custom and of convention, and, in particular, to do away with the rule about shooting prisoners of war. This rule Latzis considered to be especially " ridiculous." " In a civil conflict," he wrote, " we should take for our one law the maxim that all persons bearing arms against us must be slain, even if already wounded." And the Bolshevists did not merely unchain the elemental passions : they also, for guiding those passions into the channels which they desired, evolved a regular propaganda system—an example of this being that they caused the doings in the Kuban district of March 1918 to be accompanied everywhere with the slogan of " Long live the Red Terror! " afterwards that slogan was adopted in due form by the Piatigorsk branch of the Communist Party.

From a Bolshevist who took part in the civil war in

[1] See his book The Kremlin from behind Prison Bars, p. 177.

Southern Russia we have the following description of an amazing scene:

One day I found some Bolshevist Cossacks shooting officers against a haystack. Truly I was pleased at this, for it showed me that we had no aimless sport here, but civil war of the right kind. So, riding up to the men, I saluted them. And they, recognising me, cheered, and one of their number said : "So long as we have Red officers like yourself we shall not want also for White officers. Here are a few of them now being finished off." And I replied to this : " Quite right, my friends ! Continue the good work in constant remembrance that only by leaving not a single White officer alive shall we attain freedom." [1]

[1] See "For the Soviet Power" in S. M. Pougachevsky's Diary of a Participant in the Civil War, and his Materials for a History of the Red Army, I, 406.

CHAPTER V

" CLASS TERRORISM "

Proletarians, never let it escape you that cruelty is a remnant of slavery, and a testimony to the brutality which still lurks in us all.—JAURES.

So far the data concerning risings which I have extracted from the British White Book deal exclusively with the suppression of peasant outbreaks—outbreaks of the kind which never failed to occur where the Bolshevists had been in occupation ; but also I have at my disposal data dealing with the suppression of risings of industrial workers in the towns. On March 5, 1919, Sir C. Eliot wrote to Lord Curzon :

Industrial workers who oppose the Bolshevists are treated precisely similarly to peasants who do so. Last December a hundred labourers belonging to Motovilyky, near Perm, were shot merely for having protested against the Bolshevists' doings in the locality.[1]

Nor do English reports alone furnish an endless succession of such facts ! Similar reports appear both in the ordinary Russian press and in the Bolshevists' official sheets (for at that period it was still possible for a private Russian journal to describe the outbreaks which Bolshevist tyranny in general, and seizures of food stuffs in payment of the grain tax in particular, periodically evoked amongst the rural classes). And always suppression of these risings was accompanied with

[1] See p. 54 of the British White Book cited.

bloodshed: even the history of Russia, rich as it is in peasant outbreaks, cannot show any suppressions of popular outbreaks comparable with those perpetrated by the Bolshevists—no, not even the serfdom period.

Of course, one reason of this is that modern improvements in mechanical equipment, and the invention of tanks and machine-guns and poison gas, enabled greater resources to be brought to bear against the rebels than had ever before been the case.

During 1918 and 1919 I collected abundant material on this particular subject; and though I lost it all again during the house-to-house searches which subsequently became the rule in Moscow, as in every other city of Russia, I can at least cite an interesting document which gives a summary of events in Tambov Province just before the Antonov rising—before the rising which, once started, spread like wildfire, and was, primarily, a retort to the anti-peasant policy known as " class terrorism." Of date the end of 1919, and with, for subject, the suppression of the Tambov " disorders " of the recent November, the document represents a memorandum presented to the Council of People's Commissaries by a local group of Social Revolutionaries. The late ebullitions of popular wrath in the Tambov region had been due to many causes, including mobilisation, power to requisition stock, and compulsory registration of Church property; and, having started in one volost, or minor district, the unrest speedily spread until it had involved the province as a whole.

The Soviet Power (the local Social Revolutionaries' memorandum stated) has sent thither punitive expedition after punitive expedition, and we venture now to submit to the Council a brief exposition of bloodthirsty doings which throw into the shade even those once perpetrated in the same

region by the oprichnik[1] Louzhenovsky. For every volost in the Spassk district whither a punitive expedition was dispatched has seen peasants flogged as abominably as indiscriminately, and many of them shot. Also, ten peasants and a priest have been publicly executed in the square of the town of Spassk, whilst the inhabitants of the villages whence the victims came had to attend the spectacle, and then supply transport for the bodies' removal. Also, thirty men have been shot behind the prison of Spassk after first being compelled to dig their own graves. In the Kirsanov district their frenzy of cruelty has led the " forces of pacification " even to keep victims locked up in a shed for days with a hungry boar, until some of those subjected to the torture of fear became bereft of reason. And the head of the Nashtchokin Committee in Aid of the Destitute presumed to perpetrate unauthorised executions long after the last punitive expedition had left the neighbourhood; and in the Morshansk district hundreds have been shot with shell fire, and thousands wounded, and villages almost destroyed with the same, and the peasants' property looted by Red Guards and civilian Communists, and their stocks of meal and grain taken away. But the fate of the Michaevsk peasants has been worst of all. For in Michaevsk every tenth hut has been burnt to the ground, and the men, women, and children all driven into the woods. And at Perkino, though the villagers took no active part in the rebellion, but only elected an independent soviet of their own, a detachment from Tambov has come and put all that Soviet's members to death. And when fifteen peasants of Ostrov were brought to the prison at Morshansk they were seen first to have been horribly injured, whilst at this very moment there is lying in that prison a woman who has had all the hair plucked from her head. And dozens of cases of rape have taken place in Morshansk, and eight peasants, after being grossly maltreated by Red Guards, have been buried alive. And as regards the Bolshevist officials who have most distinguished themselves in this region, they are Tsufirin, the leader of the punitive expedition, a Communist named Parfenoy whom the Tsarist Government brought back from

[1] That is to say, a member of the Oprichnina, or corps of police-lifeguardsmen, which Tsar Ivan IV ("Ivan the Terrible") maintained during the sixteenth century.

exile in answer to a petition, and Sokolov, an ex-sergeant-major. In short, in this district of Tambov whole villages have been destroyed—some of them by incendiary firing, and some by shell firing—and many inhabitants executed. And Bondary has had its local clergy shot for having held a service after the Bolshevists had deposed the local soviet.[1] . . . The extent to which the Bolshevists have shown tact and decency in their suppressions of the risings is best illustrated by the fact that they commissioned a sixteen-year-old youth named Lebsky to lead a punitive expedition, and appointed to the post of head of the Tambov Che-Ka a certain A. S. Klinkov—an ex-fraudulent bankrupt trader, an ignoramus, an extortioner, a drunkard, and a man who, up to the outbreak of the October revolution, was engaging in discreditable speculative operations. And that post he is still holding, and it gives him a right of disposal over all prisoners' lives, and he uses that right for shooting prisoners indiscriminately. And in addition to dispatching punitive expeditions, the authorities have initiated a practice of dispatching certain Communist nuclei, in order that those nuclei may " acquire " a taste for fighting, although they are nothing better than bands of ruffians, and spend most of their time in carousing, committing arson and theft, and transforming the great principles of " liberty, fraternity, and equality" into the horrible principles of the medieval Tartar invasions. . . . Also, we must call your attention to the sanguinary work perpetrated by the Lettish detachments. Universally they leave behind them terrible memories. And every prison and dungeon under the Che-Ka is filled to overflowing, the number of persons arrested having come to amount to thousands, with cold and starvation causing disease to become rampant amongst them. And their ultimate fate, in most cases, is certainly that they will be shot. And that will continue to be prisoners' fate so long as commissaries and Che-Kas like the present ones hold power.

The result of the constant increase in peasant risings was that eventually they overflowed from the villages

[1] A propos, a report from a local Che-Ka included the query: " What are we to do with people who would celebrate the downfall of the Peasants' and Workers' Power by holding thanksgiving services ? " See No. 4 of the Weekly, p. 25.

into the towns. The Berlin-published Russian journal Roul gives us a particularly vivid description of a peasant upheaval in Petropavlovsk. True, the peasants figuring in that rising are described as "White forces," but the movement was a purely popular one, and I will cite the conclusion of the eye-witness's narrative:

Here the Red Terror began as soon as ever the Red soldiers had entered the place. And with the Terror went mass arrests, and mass shootings with no preliminary trial. Also, every telegraph and telephone pole soon was bristling with posters to the effect that, in the event of another raid by a White detachment, the town would be razed to the ground by the Red artillery. A doctor of ours who was taken prisoner by the White forces, and subsequently restored to us, has since told us that the Red Terror has assumed even more ghastly forms in the villages than in the towns—that in the villages every single hut has been pillaged, and all the cattle stolen, and a great number of families killed without a sparing even of the aged and women and children. And in other huts there are left only the aged and the infants, for the adult members of the household have all escaped to the White army, whilst both the open roads and the village streets are lying heaped with peasant corpses so mutilated as to defy identification, but thrown there " to serve as a warning to others," with the people forbidden to take them away for burial. Also, the doctor has told us that in some cases the peasants have wreaked such ruthless vengeance upon the Communists that the public hall of Petropavlovsk is standing lined with rows of mutilated Communist corpses, and on each Sunday between February and May last the Communists accorded choral rites of burial to fifty or sixty of these slain comrades at a time, whilst both the market square and what used to be the butchers' market are lying strewn with (again, "as a warning to others ") bodies of anti-Communist hostages who were slaughtered as soon as ever the Bolshevists had consolidated their position in the town, with, amongst them, the mayor, the deputy mayor, the local magistrate, and several prominent merchants and other citizens. Moreover, a huge number of unknown victims has been shot in the Che-Ka's courtyard ;

both by day and by night, for months past, firing has been heard there. And in some cases the victims were not shot at all, but slashed to death with swords : in which case their cries of agony reached the ears even of the surrounding inhabitants. And amongst the executed were the local bishop and most of the local cathedral staff, on the accusation that they had rung the cathedral bells in welcome to the Whites— the Communists having ignored the fact that when the Whites had entered the city the time had been just four o'clock in the afternoon, when, of course, the bells were tolling for evening service ! At this very moment the bishop's body is lying, as a further "warning," in the public square near the road leading to the railway station, where the Eastern Siberian Army has its headquarters. And I have been told that as soon as the staff of those headquarters entered the town they ordered all prisoners arrested before the arrival of the White forces—even prisoners arrested merely for trifling offences, and sentenced merely to a few weeks' or a few months' imprisonment—to be shot. I myself left Petropavlovsk on May 10. Everything then was quiet in the town, despite that many Red Guards still were there. Only in the surrounding districts was the rebellion not yet wholly quelled, and peasant prisoners still were being brought in from the villages, and mutilated remains of Communists being given musical burial on holidays. Also, I know of a case in the district of Mozhaisk where the peasants had become so embittered that, after catching a commissary, they divided him in two with a wooden saw.

The first volume of the Bulletin issued by the Social Revolutionaries of the Left gives, under date of January 1919, similar details with regard to other localities. We read that in the Elifansky district of Toula Province, towards the close of 1918, 150 peasants were shot; in the Medinsk district of Kalouga Province, 170 ; in the Prousk district of Riazan Province, 300 ; in the Kasimov district, 150 ; in the Spassk district, several hundreds ; in Tver Province, 200; and in the Velizhesk district of Smolensk, 600.

And as regards risings which took place in two villages

around Kronstadt during the July of 1921, our information is exact. We know that in the one village 170 persons were shot, and in the other 130, and that in each case the principle observed was to select every third man. Again, during a rising in Kolivan (Tomsk Province), during 1920, over 5000 peasants were shot,[1] while a like rising in Oufa Province has been declared to have been suppressed so ruthlessly that even the official data had to admit to 10,000 being the number shot, whilst unofficial data gave the number as 25,000, or more.[2] And from a correspondent of the journal Znamya Trouda (" The Labour Standard ") we have it that " in the Volkovsky district of Kharkov Province hundreds of peasants were shot"—the Left Social Revolutionaries of Moscow having contrived to have the statement conveyed to and published in the city itself. In one village 140 persons are said to have been executed.[3] And the following description of some mutinies in White Russia during 1921 constitutes a page from the history of a regional struggle the causes of which were the food tax and the punishment of acts of opposition to the tax:

The whole of the Liaskovicheskaya volost in the Bobrinsk district has been fired by the Bolshevists [the description says]. Peasants have been arrested, and exiled either to Vologda or to the famine-stricken areas, and had their property confiscated. And the Bolshevists still are seizing hostages by the dozen wherever a peasant insurgent band appears. The punitive expedition operating in this neighbourhood is Stok's. Before execution he tortures his prisoners, and seeks to extort confessions, by crushing their fingers in door-cracks.[4]

[1] See the Revolutsionnaya Rossia, No. 12.
[2] The Znamya Trouda, No. 3, 1920.
[3] See a letter of June, 1920, quoted in The Kremlin from behind Prison Bars.
[4] See the Posledniya Novosty of September 21, 1921.

Now let me cite a document that was published at the time of the suppression of the Antonov rising. The document is an Order issued by the " Plenipotentiary Committee of the All-Russian Central Executive Commission." Of date June 11, 1921, it says :

(1) Citizens refusing to divulge their names shall be shot without trial. (2) The decree authorising seizure of hostages shall be read to all villages guilty of concealing arms, and hostages shall be seized and shot unless the arms first be handed over. (8) Households harbouring bandits (peasants in rebellion) shall be arrested and exiled, and deprived of their property. Also, the chief worker in each such household shall be shot without trial. (4) Households harbouring members of bandits' families, or concealing those families' property, shall themselves be treated as bandits, and have their chief worker shot without trial. (5) The property of a bandit whose family may succeed in escaping shall be apportioned to any peasants who have remained faithful to the Soviet Power, and his dwelling be burnt. (6) Let this Order be carried out with the most ruthless severity.[1]

Tambov and its neighbourhood, therefore, were drenched with blood, and Gan, the Left Social Revolutionary, in no way exaggerated when, in addressing a Bolshevist revolutionary tribunal, he said [2] :

Thousands of our peasants have been shot by you and other circuit tribunals and provincial Che-Kas. You have mown down defenceless people with machine-gun fire ; you have exiled peasant families to the northern provinces not merely in thousands, but in tens of thousands, and pillaged and burnt their property.[3] And members of my party possess also data referring to other provinces—to the Provinces of Samara and Kazan and Saratov. And both from there and from everywhere else our information is the same.

[1] See No. 1 of the Za Narod (" For the People ").

[2] See " Report of the Trial of some Left Social Revolutionaries on June 27 and 28, 1922," in The Days of the Revolution, p. 296.

[3] One provincial executive committee brazenly admitted to having ordered villages of from 6,000 to 10,000 inhabitants to be burnt to the ground for tearing down official proclamations.

In Bouzoulok, during 1920, 4000 persons were shot; in Christopol 600 [1]; in Elatina (where you forced the victims to dig their own graves) 300.[2]

All of which applies to Central Russia—rather, to Great Russia—alone, without mentioning the Ukraine and Siberia.

Another device utilised by the Bolshevists was mock shootings; on which occasions the prisoners were divested of their clothes, compelled to dig, as it were, their own graves, and, on the order to fire being given, fired at merely with shots above their heads. Many such cases occur in Maslov's well-known book, Russia after Four Years of Revolution.

" In Arskaya volost (Kazan district) thirty peasants were placed in a row, and had their heads slashed off with swords." Such is the statement to be found in No. 1 of the Bulletin issued by the Social Revolutionary Party ! And the journal continues: " Floggings ? Floggings take place everywhere. Rods, ramrods, cudgels, whips, fists, rifle butts, and revolver stocks all are used for the beating of peasants."

Officially it has been stated that floggings have ceased to be inflicted in Russia, " for the reason that corporal punishment lies beneath the dignity of a Peasants' and Workers' Government " ; but the facts do not coincide with the statement. In his book The Moral Aspect of the Revolution[3] Steinberg, ex-Bolshevist Commissary of Justice, adduces an interesting collection of communications relating to floggings which he and his fellow Communist administrators carried out during the earlier days of the Bolshevist regime. And the collection carries the more weight in that its basis rests upon reports published by the Soviet press itself—by

[1] See the Znamya Trouda, No. 8, September, 1920.
[2] Gan received this item from an eye-witness.
[3] Pp. 56-61.

the Pravda, and by the Izvestia. Certainly the former journal published an article entitled "Derzhimordi[1] under the Soviet Flag," which told how a grain surplus was beaten out of a reluctant rural population, and a rebellion of koulaki suppressed, by the Che-Ka of Nikolaevsk (Province of Vologda):

The Che-Ka collected a multitude of peasants into an icy-cold barn, divested them of their clothing, and beat them with ramrods. And in the Brilsky district (Vitebsk Province) peasants were beaten by order of the local Che-Ka. And in the village of Ouren (Kostroma Province), though peasants donned five shirts apiece to soften the blows, it was in vain, since the whips, made of twisted wire, cut right through the material, and drove it into the wounds until it dried there, and had later to be soaked out with warm water.[2]

Again, a letter sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party by Madame Spiridonova quotes an informant as saying : "A third of the men of our volost were lined up, and beaten with clenched fists in the presence of the other two-thirds. Anyone trying to escape the beating with fists received also a flogging with whips." To which the informant adds an account of the doings of a "requisitionary expedition " :

Whenever . . . the expedition reached a fresh village its officers made the members of the village council kneel down before them, that the peasants might conceive a proper respect for the Soviet Power. "And flog them too," the officers said, "so that they may remember us the better."

After this can one wonder that the Pravda had eventually to admit that the term " Communist " had come to be synonymous with "hooligan," " ne'er-do-weel," and " charlatan " ? "We are treated like senseless beasts," once a peasant said.

[1] A slang term (literally, an " insolent jowl ") for an official such as Gogol has immortalised in his play The Inspector-General.
[2] From Steinberg's book.

But what a Terror of requisitionary expeditions and formations of "committees of poorer peasants " and armed, hooligan dictatorship really meant in a rural district can be realised only by trying to imagine the conditions of peasant life whilst that Terror was in force. I quote some villagers of Makarievo : " Whereas we used only to have the police commissioner riding upon our backs, now we have the commissary riding there." And in a passage from a report published in the Pravda we read :

Whenever an expedition that was collecting the grain tax in the Khvalinsky district (Saratov Province) reached a village the peasants were commanded to surrender their best-looking girls to the officials.

In the same spirit a grain-tax commissary instructed a local " committee of poorer peasants " to inform your inhabitants that within three days they shall render me 10,000 pouds of grain, and that any person not complying with this Order shall be shot with my own hand, which finished off, only last night, a disobedient rascal in the village of Varvarinka. . . . Also, I empower so-and-so to shoot in the same way anyone not complying with my Order in this rascally volost of... And the name of the volost followed.[1]

Hence we see that shootings and floggings were the two symbols of " the period leading to Socialism."

But neither real life nor life in fiction could furnish a parallel to an incident which occurred in the Shatsky district of Tambov Province, and is to be found described by Steinberg in his book:

In this district the peasants had a particular veneration for an ikon of the Vishinskaya Madonna ; and when influenza broke out in the district a solemn procession was held in the ikon's honour, and a celebrating of Mass. And, on the

[1] From No. 15 of the Izvestia, 1919.

Bolshevists seizing both ikon and clergy, and the peasants learning later that the Che-Ka had insulted the ikon, and " dragged it about the floor," they set forth to " rescue Our Lady," with women and children and the aged and everyone else joining the throng. And then the Che-Ka turned machine-guns upon them, and mowed them down in rows as, " with terrible eyes which saw nothing," they moved forward over the bodies of dying and dead, and mothers, flinging themselves before their children, cried : " O Holy Virgin and Defender, bless us as gladly we lay down our lives for thee ! "

Always the Bolshevists made it clear that the Terror was directed not so much against the bourgeoisie as a class as against all classes in general, and that the intelligentsia happened to become the special victim of the Terror because the intelligentsia happened to comprise all classes.

" The prime object of the Terror," said a leading article in the Che-Ka's Weekly, " is the destruction of the spiritual leaders and directors of the enemies of the Proletarian Government." True, sometimes decrees of local Che-Kas and tribunals stated that a sentence had been remitted " because of the accused's proletarian origin," but this was a blind, a mere masking of the Terror's true nature, and for a time deceived the less thinking sections of the Russian population, but soon ceased to deceive even them.

It has been related of a certain Bolshevist official that, when holding an inquiry in a village, he obtained such " evidence " as he required merely by shouting out, " Show me your hands ! " And if he next cried " Strip the fellow ! " the clothes were at once torn from the prisoner's back, and the prisoner himself set against a lorry, bayoneted, and thrown into one of the cavities locally known as "plague pits" through cattle having been thrown into them during an earlier season of

cattle plague. And a match for this official in rude arrogance was a certain Mousikin who had been an artisan in the Lefortovsky Quarter of Moscow. The Pravda itself has told us how, at the time when the Muscovite Soviet was debating the question of suspending the Che-Kas, and Latzis propounded the thesis that legal trials were not needed, Mousikin capped this by saying :

Why even question prisoners ? . . . Personally I should just walk into the accused's kitchen, look at his stock pot, and, if the pot should contain meat, account him an enemy of the people, and shoot him against his own kitchen wall.

Yet if this truly " proletarian " procedure had been followed in 1917 and subsequently, not a man of the privileged Communist Party would have escaped execution! Yet they have a saying that "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat " !

Again, how are we to credit Latzis' assertion that his Party never permitted the Terror " to touch peasants and industrial workers who have erred merely in being misled," or Mousikin's statement in No. 3 of the Weekly that " in no instance have we directed terrorist persecution against the working-classes " ? For, to take only a single instance, the inhabitants of Odessa had no sooner begun to protest against the mass shootings instituted by the local Che-Ka during the July of 1919 than that Che-Ka issued an order that :

Inasmuch as certain counter-revolutionaries are spreading false rumours, and saying that industrial workers have been shot, the Praesidium herewith announces that in no instance has such a worker, nor yet a peasant, been shot, but merely a few proven bandits and murderers.

And the document added that " any counter-worker so disposed " might come and inquire into any allegation

of a worker having been shot by the Che-Ka. Finally, " from now onwards the supreme punitive measure allowed by the law during a state of siege shall be applied to anyone from whom a false rumour shall emanate." Which warning would scarcely leave anyone "disposed " to indulge in inquiries of the kind indicated, or in any inquiries at all![1]

In 1920 there took place in Astrakhan massacres exceptional in their scope even for Soviet Russia. And in September of the same year sixty representatives of the workers of Kazan were shot for requesting an eight hours day, a revision of the scale of wages, and the deportation of the Magyars who had long been making trouble in the district.[2] Later these doings led the Left Social Revolutionary Party of the country to appeal to the workers to refrain from participating in the ensuing May Day celebrations, on the ground that " ever since the October Revolution the Communist Government has been shooting toilers in their thousands —peasants, soldiers of the ranks, industrial workers, and sailors alike." [3]

On an official building in Soviet Russia there stands inscribed the motto, "For the Bourgeoisie, Prison! For the Peasants and the Industrial Workers, Comradely Persuasion ! " And in the ravine near Saratov which I have described the contained abomination is made up of peasants and industrial workers just as much as of bourgeois and intellectuals and prominent politicians. Nay, it even includes members of the Socialist Party! Similarly, the concentration camp near Kharkov which witnessed most of Saenko's exploits was, though nominally a camp for bourgeois alone, a

[1] See Margoulies' book in this connection.

[2] See the Znamya Trouda, No. 3. Cf. also the Ekaterinodar shootings of industrial workers already described.

[3] See the Left Socialist Revolutionists' Party's Bulletin, No. 4.

camp crowded with representatives of all classes, but most of all with representatives of the peasant class.

In fact, what was the amount of peasants' and workers' blood shed during the Red Terror ? The question is one which will never admit of an answer. Once I attempted, with my card index library, to make a table of social statuses. True, this applied to the year 1918 only, and the data were far from complete; but at least I succeeded in arriving at the following improvised classification :

Intellectuals	1286
Hostages (from the professional classes exclusively)	1026
Peasants	962
Urban Dwellers	468
Persons Unknown	450
Criminal Elements (which in many cases represented persons arrested, in reality, for political reasons)	438
Officials convicted of professional misconduct	187
Domestic Servants	118
Soldiers and Sailors	28
Bourgeois	22
Clergy	19

And though the above grouping is a casual grouping only, it is sufficient to refute the statements of leading Bolshevists, and to dislodge the corner-stone on which Communists strive to rear apologiae for their system. It was inevitable that the internecine struggle for power should become what it was. Inevitably that struggle came to resemble the parallel struggle witnessed during the French Revolution. And though this incontrovertible thesis is sometimes contested, the day will come when it will stand

corroborated. Take another illustration of it. On August 21, 1919, an ex-warder from the Che-Ka gaol at Nikolaevsk testified before the Denikin Commission that the lot of workers and peasants in that prison who lacked the means to purchase its alleviation was far harder than was the lot of their fellow workers and peasants, and that many more of the latter were shot than of intellectuals. And a Denikin Commission document declares that when the municipality of Nikolaevsk was assisting the Commission to make local enquiries, and to attempt to fix the total of shot, it finally obtained proof of a total of 115 (though the real number must have been much larger, seeing that many burial pits could not be located, and advanced decomposition rendered two such pits impossible of examination, and the Che-Ka had published only partial lists of its victims, with no information whatsoever as to local deserters from the Red Army) and then helped the Commission to determine the social status of 73 out of the 115, with the result that the list was found to be headed by 25 merchants and other bourgeois, and filled up with 15 members of the working intelligentsia (engineers, doctors, students, and the like) and as many as 33 peasants and industrial operatives.

In fact, as the Terror spread, the Bolshevists' prisons became more and more filled with the proletariat and the working intelligentsia, and the shootings of the latter proportionately more numerous.

In addition to which there has now become added the category of Socialists.

The statement that the Red Terror was a response to a White Terror, a war of extermination against "enemies of our class who constantly plot the ruin of

the industrial and agrarian proletariat," is a statement explicable only on the hypothesis of political exigency. For it was the Bolshevists' own appeals to their Red Army that caused the civil war to become the cruel, truly brutal thing that it became, added to the fact that with Bolshevist propaganda went misrepresentations designedly calculated to demoralise certain social sections. Such was the call (and the menace) to volunteers to engage in " espionage " work—an order issued by Piatakov, head of the Donetz Che-Ka, and proclaiming that " any failure of any Communist to denounce a traitor will be regarded as an offence against the Revolution, and punished with all the vigour of the laws of the present war-revolutionary period." [1] Thus denunciation of one's neighbour was elevated into a civic duty, into a civic virtue ! Bukharin, for his part, said :

Henceforth all of us must become agents of the Che-Kas, whether in our houses, or in our streets, or in our public places, or on our railways, or in our soviet institutions. Everywhere and at all times must we watch for counterrevolutionaries, apprehend them, and consign them to the nearest Che-Ka.

And Miasnikov, the Communist who assassinated the Grand Duke Michael, and subsequently fell into disgrace for having published a pamphlet opposing Lenin's policy, advised that :

Every one of us workers do become an agent of a Che-Ka, and keep the Revolution apprised of what is being done by Counter-Revolution. Only so shall we become strong and secure towards future efforts. For an honest citizen no other mode of procedure is possible. It is no more than his duty.

[1] See the journal Kharkovskaya Svezda (" Star of Kharkov "), of June 7, 1919.

That is to say, the Communist Party was to become one huge politico-police force, and Russia herself one huge Che-Ka for the purpose of stifling freedom and independent thought. And take a suggestion tendered to Moscow by the Che-Ka of the Alexandrovskaya Railway :

That all railway workers be charged to inform their railway Che-Ka of any public meeting known to be pending, so that representatives of the Che-Ka may attend the gathering, and note the gathering's proceedings.

And not only were the people as a whole called upon to engage in "espionage." Also the people as a whole were requested to sanction the most odious forms of tyranny. For example, the Kievan revolutionary tribunal cried :

Communists, Red Guards, and others, fulfil your great mission by keeping constantly in communication with our investigation department, so that wherever you may be— whether in a city, or in a village, or a few paces away, or ten versts distant—you may telegraph to us your information, or else call in person, and so enable our inquiry agents to hasten to the spot.[1]

And the same city of Kiev saw its provincial committee of defence empower not merely individuals, but the population as a whole, to :

Seize and detain any and every person soever who shall be found seeking to thwart the Soviet Government, and to select hostages from the wealthy, and to shoot such hostages if any counter-revolutionary manifestation shall take place, and to subject villages to military investment until arms have been surrendered thence, and to undertake indemnified domiciliary searches after the expiration of dates for surrender of arms, and to shoot all persons found still in possession of the same, and to fix general

[1] See the Kievan Izvestia of July, 24, 1919.

contributions, and to deport leaders and instigators of rebellion, and to make over those leaders' property to non-affluent dwellers.[1]

Frequently, also, the Soviet's provincial press displayed such advertisements as: " The Provincial Che-Ka of Kostroma herewith proclaims that it is the duty of every citizen of the R.S.F.S.R. to shoot at sight Citizen Smorodinov, now standing convicted of wilful defection." And once a " Comrade Ilyin " wrote from Vladikavkaz : " Each of you Communists possesses the right to kill any agent-provocateur, or person guilty of sabotage, or person seeking to hinder you from winning the victory over your foeman's body." [2] Lastly, in 1918 a revolutionary tribunal in the South went so far as to confer upon all its Communist supporters " power of life and death over counter-revolutionaries of every species," and a Red Guard association in Astrakhan to order that, if a single shot should be fired at either a Communist worker or a Red Guard, hostages from amongst the bourgeoisie " shall be executed within twenty minutes."

[1] See the Nachalo (" Principle " or " Guide ") of July 19, 1919.
[2] See the Narodnaya Vlast (" Rule of the People ") of January 24, 1919.

CHAPTER VI

CHE-KA TYRANNY

Wild beasts should be shot, but not wantonly teased and tormented.—A. P. POLONSKY.

THE instigators of the Red Terror did more than afford full scope to lawlessness outside Che-Ka premises; they also established within those premises a complete system of illegality, and a mere glance at official comments on lists of shot will bring before the imagination an unforgettable spectacle of outrage. Frequently persons were shot by order of officials who did not so much as know what the accusations had been, or even the victims' names. " Shot—Names unknown " !

On June 18, 1918, Gorky's journal, the Novaya Zhizn or " New Life," published an interview with Dzherzhinsky and Zachs, who expounded to the journalist the policy of the Che-Ka, whilst Dzherzhinsky, in particular, said :

Those who accuse us of secret murder do so wrongly. As a matter of fact, the Che-Ka consists of eighteen tested revolutionaries, is representative both of the Party's Central Committee and of the Party's Central Executive, and can pass a sentence of death only by an unanimous decree— one dissentient vote alone being sufficient to save an accused's life. Above all things our strength lies in the fact that we know nor brother nor friend, and treat with especial severity any colleague found wanting in rectitude. Hence the Che-Ka's personal reputation stands above suspicion. Also, it is swiftly that we deal out justice : it is seldom that we allow more than one or two or, at most, three days to elapse between arrest and sentence. At the same time,

that does not mean that our findings are not invariably well-founded. The possibility of a mistake is always present, but as yet no instance of such a contretemps has occurred, and the best proof of what I say is to be found in our protocols, which will show that, in most cases, a criminal, on being confronted with a mass of circumstantial evidence, at once confesses to his guilt. And how could guilt be made clearer than by a confession from the accused himself ?

True, the correspondent of the Novaya Zhizn next referred to rumours as to employment of physical violence during examinations of prisoners ; but Zachs at once replied :

Rumours of that kind are false ; and the more so because we make it our particular business to exclude from our labours any element which threatens to prove unworthy of sharing in those labours.

Whence, as I will show, the interview constituted a tissue of lies.

Callousness in Executions

For one thing, the above-named officials' assertion that eighteen members were required to pass a death sentence was false. All too frequently such a sentence was passed by two or three members alone—even by one after a " people's justice " had been empowered with the capital penalty.[1]

" It is swiftly that we deal out justice." Well, possibly Dzherzhinsky and his kind did deal out justice swiftly on occasions of mass shootings. At the same time, I know of innumerable cases when things were otherwise, and months passed before the accused was even questioned, and, from first to last, the proceedings with regard to a given prisoner occupied more than a year before they reached their inevitable end in execution.

[1] See the Nachalo of July 24, 1919.

" We are accused of secret murder." Quite so. Seldom were shootings officially reported, even though on September 5, 1918, during the height of a wave of Red terrorism, a resolution of the Council of People's Commissaries called for " compulsory publication both of names of the shot and of reasons for applying the supreme punitive measure ! "

The exact manner of fulfilling this resolution, so far as practice was concerned, can be gained by perusing casual announcements in the Central Che-Ka's Weekly, whose purpose was " co-ordination and direction of the provincial Che-Kas' activities." To take a particularly instructive illustration. On Oct 26, 1918, six weeks after Madame Kaplau's attempt upon Lenin, No. 6 of the Weekly published what purported to be a list of the persons shot for the deed. Yet though, in reality, the number of the shot had amounted to several hundreds, the list's total amounted only to ninety, and in sixty-seven instances gave no Christian name or patronymic, and in two instances only some initials, and in eighteen instances only a surname and the social status— " Razoumovsky, ex-lieutenant-colonel"; " Kotomazov, ex-student"; " Mouratov, co-operative employee "; and so forth. And only in ten instances was any reason for the execution appended, with, even so, the accused merely described as "an obvious counter-revolutionary," or " a White Guard," et cetera, et cetera. And though the list also contained such entries as " Khvostov, ex-Minister of the Interior, and a counter-revolutionary," and " Vistorgov, Arch-Priest," the reader was left to guess that a bare entry of " Maklakov " referred to another man who had been a Minister of the Interior. True, in the latter case, the identity was easy enough to discern ; but what of the many plain Zhichkovskys and Ivanovs and Zhelinskys and so forth who figured

with him ? No one was to be allowed to know who they had been. Nor, probably, will anyone ever know.

And if the central authority's orders were carried out by that authority's central subordinate organisations in such a manner, what must have been the case in provinces remote from the centre? Well, there the Terror assumed forms truly bestial, and official reports of shootings became even more obscure than reports of shootings in the metropolitan neighbourhood. " Thirty-nine prominent landowners have been shot after arrest for connection with the counter-revolutionary organisation known as ' The Union to Support the Provisional Government'"; " Six adherents of the late Imperial regime have been shot" ; and so forth. Or a few names would be published over a note that the remaining, unnamed persons in the list had met with a like fate.

And the same procedure continued even after what Moroz, the notorious Che-Ka employee, described (in No. 6 of the Weekly) as " chaotic disorder " had passed away. Whence Dzherzhinsky's denial that his Che-Ka committed secret murder was out of place. It did so in every sense of the term. Sometimes it passed a death sentence without even having seen the person whom it was condemning, or even listened to a plea on his behalf. Also, it was seldom that the names of the condemners themselves appeared, or that the permanent identity of a Che-Ka's personnel became public property. (In passing, shootings carried out without any notification of occurrence, or of names, acquired the special or technical name of " blind-alley " shootings.)

Hence, what impudence must have been needed for a man like Chicherin to reply to a correspondent of

the Chicago Tribune, when the latter inquired how many persons had been shot " by order of secret tribunals," and what the fate of the surviving members of the Tsar's family had been :

In Russia no such thing as a " secret tribunal" exists. And as regards the number of persons shot by order of the Che-Ka, the number has already been published. Nor do I know anything about the Tsar's daughters, save that I have read in some journal that they are now supposed to be residing in America![1]

Again, Dzherzhinsky spoke of " confessions of guilt from the accused himself." Well, I myself have heard such " confessions " made—made under pressure of threats, at the point of a revolver. So also have many other inmates of Che-Ka gaols.

" Rumours that we employ physical violence are false." We shall see about that, and in the meanwhile it may be said that Che-Kas inflicted the most excruciating of tortures, and that the Che-Kas which inflicted them were not exclusively Che-Kas sitting in the more remote provinces. For human life came to be so valueless in Soviet Russia that Golodin (a deputy sent from Moscow to sit on the Che-Ka of Kungur) put things in a nutshell when he said : " Nowadays, neither suspicion nor investigation, nor even proof, is needed for the shooting of an accused. When the step is deemed advisable one can just shoot, and have done with it."

Next, let us consider some of the published reasons for executions, as occasionally set forth in the official and semi-official Bolshevist press. They are significant. Sometimes we come across a reason at least definite to the point of describing the " criminal " as " a cunning and crafty counter-revolutionary," or as

[1] See the Posledinaya Novosty of April 25, 1922.

" a wife fully cognisant of her husband's activities," or as " the son," or " the daughter," " of a general " (these examples are from the registers of Petrograd); but more often was the " crime " set down, with amazing effrontery, as, in the case of Gorokhov, a peasant, and others, " assaulting a commissary " ; in the case of Rogov, a shopkeeper, as " using his premises for intrigue against the Soviet " ; and so forth, and so forth. Moreover, many were just described as " Shot in the ordinary course of the Red Terror," and there is nothing excessively explicit about " twenty well-known White Guards," "Zvierev, a doctor and a White Guard," " sixteen koulaki," " an ex-member of the Constitutional Democratic Party," " a counter-revolutionary by conviction," and entries of the same kind. In fact, I possess a host of cuttings from the official press to swell these instances, but anyone could obtain them by scanning the first six issues of the Weekly.

One list brought especial grief to all who had known the victims named. That list was a list comprising the names of men once prominent in the educated world of Russia, and including, amongst others, such intellectuals as N. N. Stchepkin, A. D. Apferov, A. S. Apferov, A. A. Volkov, A. I. Astrov, V. I. Astrov, N. A. Ogorodnikov, K. K. Chernoevitov, P. V. Gerasimov (who was shot under the name of " Grekov "), S. A. Kniazikov, and many more—the names numbering, in all, sixty-six, and appearing in the journals of Moscow on September 23, 1919. These murders the conscience of Society will never to the end forgive. And this applies especially in the cases of A. I. Astrov and V. I. Astrov, who were shot as "spies in Denikin's employ " because in their house there had allegedly been found (1) "a plan for reorganising our legal courts and means of transport and commissariats when the

Soviet Power shall fall," and (2) " a proclamation to the Volunteer Army."

But why, also, were N. I. Lazarevsky and Prince Oukhtomsky and others shot ? The official report is dated September 1, and says of Lazarevsky that

he had ever been a convinced supporter of a Social Democratic regime, and looked for the Soviet Power speedily to come to an end, and prepared plans in connection with the problems of (a) reorganisation of local self-government, (b) disposition of various Soviet paper currency issues, and (c) re-establishment of the credit system on Russian territory ;

whilst of Prince S. A. Oukhtomsky, the sculptor, it was said in the report that " he had betrayed to an organisation engaged in transmitting information to foreign parts certain items concerning the condition of our Russian museums [!], and prepared an article on the subject for the White press." And another of those shot was the poet Goumilev.

Similar to this report was a report of the trial of N. N. Stchepkin. The same document added that " Maria Alexandrovna Yakoubovskaya, a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party, and a school teacher, had been found to be in communication with an agent of Kolchak's "; but as a matter of fact the lady's real " crime " had been that on August 29, 1919, a few days before the Bolshevists were expelled from the city of Kiev, she had been found in a house where some other arrests (arrests in no way connected with her) were about to be carried out. At the same period the Kievan Izvestia published 127 names of persons as shot for "themselves carrying out mass shootings of workers and members of the Communist Party in localities recently vacated by Denikin and Petlura " : and though these persons may really have been the

sworn foes of the workers and the poorer peasants, which the report declared them to have been, we have only the Bolshevists' word for the fact. Again, take events in Odessa. We read:

> Nikiforov, an ex-magistrate, and subsequently caretaker at the works of the Odessa Shipping and Transport Company, has been shot for attempting evasion of mobilisation, for refusing to work for the good of Soviet Russia, and for obtaining his post at the aforesaid works solely for the purpose of engaging in espionage and propaganda amongst unenlightened members of the proletariat.

And an old lady named Sigismundova was shot for having received a letter from her officer son at Varna ! She was shot, that is to say, for " having been in communication with an agent of the Entente, and of the Entente's hireling Wrangel."[1] And in Odessa, in 1919, General Baranov was shot merely for having taken a photograph of the Catherine II Memorial in that city—the said memorial having had the misfortune to be situated in the very square confronting the local Che-Ka's premises.[2]

We have seen that revolutionary tribunals shot, in addition, persons convicted of such offences as drunkenness and petty theft. And the same thing happened to an individual who was found to be in possession of an officer's badges, and to another for having "criminally recovered a son's body," and to a butcher of Moscow for having " insulted " images of Marx and Engels by calling them "scarecrows," [3] and to some doctors of Kronstadt for having " made themselves popular with the local workers." So need we wonder that the Communist officials of Ivanovo-Vornesensk

[1] See the Posledniya Novosty of November 24, 1920.
[2] From data collected by the Denikin Commission.
[3] Possibly, in this execution the orgy of Bolshevist injustice reached its apogee.

threatened similarly to shoot anyone who concealed, or failed to register, a sewing-machine,[1] or that Mitayev, the commandant of Vladikavkaz, vowed to " cleanse from off the face of the earth "anyone selling intoxicating liquor,[2] or that the commissary of posts and telegraphs at Baku issued an order that any telephone girl found guilty of tardy response to a call, or of response to a call " in an uncivil manner," should be shot within twenty-four hours ? [3]

True, of death sentences passed the All-Russian Che-Ka kept protocols; but did Dzherzhinsky really imagine that protocols like those drawn up in Kiev during 1919 were good enough to go upon ? No. 4 of the Berlin review Na Chouzhoi Storonye (" In Foreign Parts") published some astonishing Kievan returns of the sort, and also some cognate returns drawn up by the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka under friend Latzis. Which returns, with their original seals and signatures, now lie lodged in the archives of the Denikin Commission. From them let us take an example or two. They show that once (so easy is it to sign a death warrant) the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka decided fifty-nine cases at a sitting, and that on May 19, 1919, the same Che-Ka not only got through its ordinary routine work for the day, but also tried forty " personal" cases, and passed, in twenty-five of those cases, a sentence of death. And the sentences must have been (to use Dzherzhinsky's word) " well-founded," for the returns which give them do not so much as mention the antecedent "crimes." And the same applies to some executions carried out at Kharkov when two Che-Ka employees named Portugeis and Feldmann, as

[1] See the Rabochy Krai (" The Workers' Realm ") of October 19, 1919.
[2] See the Posledniya Novosty of November 6, 1920.
[3] See the same journal of November 6.

they shot the prisoners, merely achieved such a brief and rough jotting down of notes in pencil as, for example, " Baeva—Shot as an incorrigible criminal." [1]

But, of course, to a Che-Ka employee, to an individual who despised the old ethics, the old " bourgeois prejudices," such proceedings would seem no more than " trials in legal form terminating in justified shooting." Indeed, Sigal of Odessa, an ex-Che-Ka official, and at one time an ex-student of the University of Novorossisk, stated, in answer to a question from the Denikin Commission, that it had been quite a common practice for the Che-Ka's secretary merely to send out word that " the trial must be conducted in such a manner as to result in at least fifteen persons being sent to the wall."

And the same callousness with regard to human life frequently caused two or more persons to be shot through the fact that both or all of them bore the same or similar names. This might happen accidentally, or it might purposely be done to avoid any possibility of a mistake. I myself know of such a case when, in Odessa, three doctors named so wholly dissimilarly as Volkov, Valsov, and Vorobiev were shot in a batch [2]; whilst in another case a man named Ozerov was shot before the " people's prosecutor " had discovered an error to have been made—whereupon the rightful Ozerov was shot as well.[3] We find several such cases in Averbuch's book The Che-Ka of Odessa.

Again, the same Che-Ka once received information concerning some " counter-revolutionary activities"

[1] This girl of seventeen was shot ostensibly for petty theft; but there is reason to suppose that her real crime had been that she had called Steklov a " Jew."
[2] See Vishniak's Sovremenniya Zapisky (" Contemporary Notes), I, 227.
[3] See the Obstchoye Dielo (" The Common Cause "), No. 126.

said to have been carried on by a man called Aaron Chonsir, but not at the same time, unfortunately, the man's address: wherefore the "people's prosecutor" engaged in the case ordered the local street directory to be looked through, and then caused eleven persons of the accused's name to be arrested and imprisoned. Only after a fortnight of enquiries which included several applications of torture were two out of the eleven Chonsirs selected, and shot. And the reason why still as many as two were shot (although the original indictment had called for the arraignment only of one) was that the "inquisitional department" had not been able to make up its mind even with regard to the pair chosen, and so had made sure of bagging the real "counter-revolutionary" by shooting both the one and the other. Similarly a responsible witness who could not well be suspected of attempting to colour his testimony has stated that once an ex-assistant procurator named A. S. Baranov was shot in mistake for an officer of the same name ; also, that once the witness was present in a cell when the name of " Vivordtsev, Alexey " was called out, as denoting a certain prisoner destined for execution, and when the only Vivordtsev in the cell was pointed out to the authorities, but stated to possess the initials K. M., the authorities, undeterred, replied : " Never mind the exact name ! All that we want is a Vivordtsev." Lastly, an educated landowner testified before the Denikin Commission that a peasant named Yakov " Khromoy" ("the Lame ") of the village of Yavkino was shot in mistake for a perfectly sound Yakov belonging to the same village, whereas the man executed was (as his name implied) a cripple.

Occasionally, however, the lives of persons placed in such a position were saved at the last moment by a

lucky accident. Cases of the sort occurred under the "inquisitional departments" at Moscow, and similar ones are to be found recorded both in the British White Book and in The Che-Ka; whilst Nilostonsky tells of like incidents in Kiev.

In fact, "inadvertent" executions became so frequent as at last to give rise to a special class of victims, and to acquire the name of, in Che-Ka parlance, "mistakes." In 1918, when the Che-Ka of Moscow discovered a secret organisation of ex-officers known as the Levshinsky Club, all ex-officers, without exception, who happened to live in the Levshinsky Pereonlok [1] were arrested, and thrown into the Butyrka Prison— where, for fellow inmates, they had the persons who had been arrested in connection with the Lockhart affair. And of these ex-officers (who numbered in all, twenty-eight) only six lived to tell the tale. And take the following :

In Brounitsy, near Moscow, the commissaries took to shooting anyone whose looks in any way displeased them. Hence there was no need at all for the local executive committee to assemble : one of its members needed merely to say, " We have decided to, etcetera, etcetera," and nothing remained to be done save to send Red Guards for the victim, to give him a spade with which to dig his own grave, to take him to the courtyard of the local riding-school, to shoot him there, and to bury him.

All of which things at least help us to understand passages in Latzis' statistical articles which state that " shootings had to be employed to intimidate the population," or " to produce the required effect," or " to kill any leanings towards sabotage and conspiracy," and the rest. In Yaroslav, for example, he and his party shot hostages merely on the ground that a rising of koulaki

[1] Lane or alley.

was anticipated, though it had not actually come to pass. And on February 11, 1919, Mr. Alston wrote to Lord Curzon :

According to the Bolshevists, the only way to forestall counter-revolutionary movements in this town (Ekaterinburg) is anticipatorily to terrorise the inhabitants.[1]

But perhaps the vilest episode of all was the shooting of a whole family of hostages in Elizabetgrad during the May of 1920, when the four little daughters of an officer, children from seven to three years old, were shot along with their grandmother of sixty-nine !

A passing thought is : How came " counter-revolutionaries " sometimes to be shot forthwith, and sometimes to be kept until later ? There would seem to be a mystery here. When, during the autumn of 1918, a policy of shooting ex-Tsarist Ministers was entered upon, Bouligin, the ex-Minister of the Interior, had his life spared during the year just named, but on September 5, 1919, was brought before the Che-Ka of Petrograd, and tried for having pursued a reactionary policy as long ago as 1905! " Wherefore it is resolved that Citizen Bouligin be shot, and have his property confiscated, and handed over to the Executive Committee, for transference to certain workers in a State factory." [2]

Perhaps this was one of the protocols which Dzherzhinsky declared to be " well-founded " ?

Physical Outrage and Torture

If the reader will recall what has been said in connection with Che-Kas, he will scarcely doubt—nay, he will feel certain—that physical outrage was practised in Che-Ka dungeons. The appeal to European public

[1] The British White Book already quoted, p. 43.
[2] The Riazanskaya Izvestia (" Riazan News ") of September 7, 1919.

opinion framed by the Paris Executive Committee of the Russian Constituent Assembly in no way exaggerated when it protested against " the present orgy of political murder in Russia, with employment of physical torture and physical injury." For all that has ever been written about the ancient Russian prisons— in particular, about " the Russian Bastille," as the Schlusselburg Fortress, the repository of olden-time important political offenders, has been called—pales before the prisons and the prison system established by the Soviet Government. And we have seen how Peter Kropotkin declared the Soviet's prison conditions, and the practice of seizing hostages, to constitute a return to the old methods of torture.

During my confinement in the Butyrka Gaol I became acquainted with a Dr. Moudrov of Moscow, whose " offence " I do not know—I only know that he had never had any definite indictment framed against him, and that, inasmuch as he had spent several months in the Che-Ka building's dungeons before being transferred to the Butyrka, he had become so acclimatised to the prison atmosphere as to be able to be entrusted by the prison authorities with the duties of medical officer to the establishment (previously no medical staff at all had been in existence there), and dealt so efficiently with the prevailing epidemic of typhus as to be left unexamined by the Che-Ka. But at length a day arrived when he passed from us in the very midst of his mission of healing, and never returned; and soon afterwards we heard that he had been shot. No explanation has ever been forthcoming for this insensate deed of cruelty, and probably it would be impossible to present one. All that the Izvestia of October 17 said was that Dr. Moudrov " had formerly been a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party."

Another encounter in the prison similarly affected me. When, during the summer of 1922, I was summoned to give evidence in the great trial of Social Revolutionaries that was then held, I happened to walk from the cells to the court beside a thin, middle-aged man whom, on the way, I contrived to engage in a little conversation, and thereby discovered to be a Colonel Perkhourov who had taken part in the Savinkov rising at Yaroslavl in 1918, and been thrown into the Che-Ka building's cells, and, though those cells were, supposedly, only a place of detention pending inquiry, half-starved, allowed no books or interviews, and conceded no facilities for exercise. And though I could not clearly ascertain whether until now he had escaped the authorities' memory, or whether he had purposely been held over for the present occasion, at all events I found him being conducted to the court in the same capacity (as a witness) as myself. But no sooner had the proceedings begun than he found himself transferred from amongst the witnesses to amongst the accused ! And later he was taken to Yaroslavl, and, according to an officially published statement, shot.

These are examples with which I myself came in contact: but there were hundreds of others. And if this kind of thing could happen in the centre of the country, at a time when the anarchical conditions of the Bolshevists' early days of rule were supposed to have given place to a semblance of regular and established order, what must have happened in far-removed provinces where there sat enthroned despotism in its vilest forms?

Well, there was torture in progress there. For the mere fact of having to live for months, for years, in daily expectation of death alone constituted torture. And so did the provincial Che-Kas' universal system of

mock shootings ; and during the time that I was in the Butyrka I had many such cases of shootings personally related to me by informants whose veracity I have no reason to doubt, seeing that they were confiding to me their narratives whilst the shock communicated to their nerves by their horrible experiences had not yet wholly faded. Amongst others who were subjected to such an ordeal were some prominent co-operative officials of Petrograd who had been " tried " before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal during the autumn of 1920 : and in their case the torture took the form of nightly being led out as though for execution, and forced, despite the intense frost, to strip to the last shred of clothing, and witness real executions of other prisoners before being led back to their cells for the whole ghastly " rehearsal " to be repeated a few nights later.

But sometimes persons subjected to this mental torture would so lose their self-control as to make any admission rather than be compelled to go through the experience again. An American named Kalmatiano who was sentenced to death at the Lockhart trial, and subsequently reprieved, told V. A. Miakotin and myself, when the three of us were lying in the Butyrka gaol together, that thrice he and a fellow-accused named Fride had been taken out of prison as though for execution, and that though, on May 10, 1920, he was informed that his sentence had been commuted, his sentence of death had been passed as long previously as the year 1918, and meanwhile he had had to spend the whole of the intervening time in daily expectation of being shot.

A Madame E. O. Kolbasina who was imprisoned with us has since related[1] a similar experience told her by a fellow inmate. The scene of the experience was

[1] In the Volya Rossii, No. 4, 1922.

the Che-Ka's building in Moscow, and the following is the lady's account of what happened :

Convicted of offering a bribe of 100,000 roubles for the life of an officer, I was conducted to the basement of the building as though for execution, and saw there a number of corpses clad only in strips of clothing. How many of them were there I do not know, but in particular I remember two—the corpse of a woman and the corpse of a man, the latter clad only in a pair of socks. In each case the dead people had been shot through the back of the head, and the floor actually felt slippery to my feet with blood. Unwilling to undress myself, I left it to the executioners to do it for me, but they shouted, " Undress, you ! " and I felt my hands raise themselves mechanically, and automatically undo the buttons of my cloak, and take it off. And just as I was going to do the same with my gown I heard a voice reach me as though half-muffled, as though filtered through cotton-wool, and say, "Kneel down," whilst at the same moment I felt myself pushed on to one of the heaps of corpses—as a matter of fact, on to a corpse that was still quivering, and emitting gasps ! And then the voice from a distance came to me again, and seemed to say as in a whisper, " Up again, you, and quickly! " whilst someone gave a tug at my arm, and I saw Romanovsky, the "people's prosecutor," standing before me with a grin on his face—ah, you know the look of that foul, low, underhand countenance !—and saying to me : " How now, Ekaterina Petrovna ? "—for also you know how he calls his victims by their Christian names and patronymics— " how now, Ekaterina Petrovna ? You have had a little scare, have you—a little shock to the nerves ? But that is nothing, nothing. At all events it may make you feel rather more disposed to be communicative with us in future. Is not that so ? " [1]

And Madame N. Davidova, for her part, has noted the following :

To-day we heard that . . . the Baroness T—gen was not shot, after all, but only her husband and some others.

[1] From Six Months in Prison, p. 65.

Yet she had to stand by and see it done, as supposedly she waited for her own turn to arrive ! Only when everyone else had been shot was she told that she herself had been reprieved, and made to clean up the execution room, and wash away her husband's and his companions' blood. . . Her hair, I have been told, has turned completely grey.

A propos of the Saratov ravine, a narrator has said in The Che-Ka:

During the October of 1919 two young women were brought to the ravine, stripped of their clothing, and, under threat of a revolver, made to stand at the edge of the yawning abyss—this being done in order to force them to disclose where some relatives were. And [the narrator adds] when later I saw these young women their hair had turned white.

Consider also the mental and physical agonies which Ivan Ivanovich Kotov, an ex-member of the Russian Constituent Assembly, must have endured in 1918 as he was being dragged to slaughter from the hold of a barge after having had a leg and an arm broken, and an eye gouged out! [1]

The Che-Ka of Ekaterinodar, in particular, went in for intimidatory measures, and an example of them is seen in the case of a Doctor Shestakov who, after being taken across the river Kuban, and forced there and then to dig his own grave, and in every way led to suppose that he was about to be executed, was fired at only with a volley of blank cartridges. And a man named Korvin-Piotrovsky was treated similarly, and again and again, with, as a finishing touch, a cruel flogging, information that his wife and ten-year-old daughter had also been arrested, and an enforced witnessing of their subjection to a " mock " execution similar to those which had so often been inflicted upon himself.

[1] See The Che-Ka, section 108, and Chap. iv. of the Memorandum issued by the Social Revolutionary Party.

Exhuming Bolshevists' victims at Odessa.

[See page 152.]

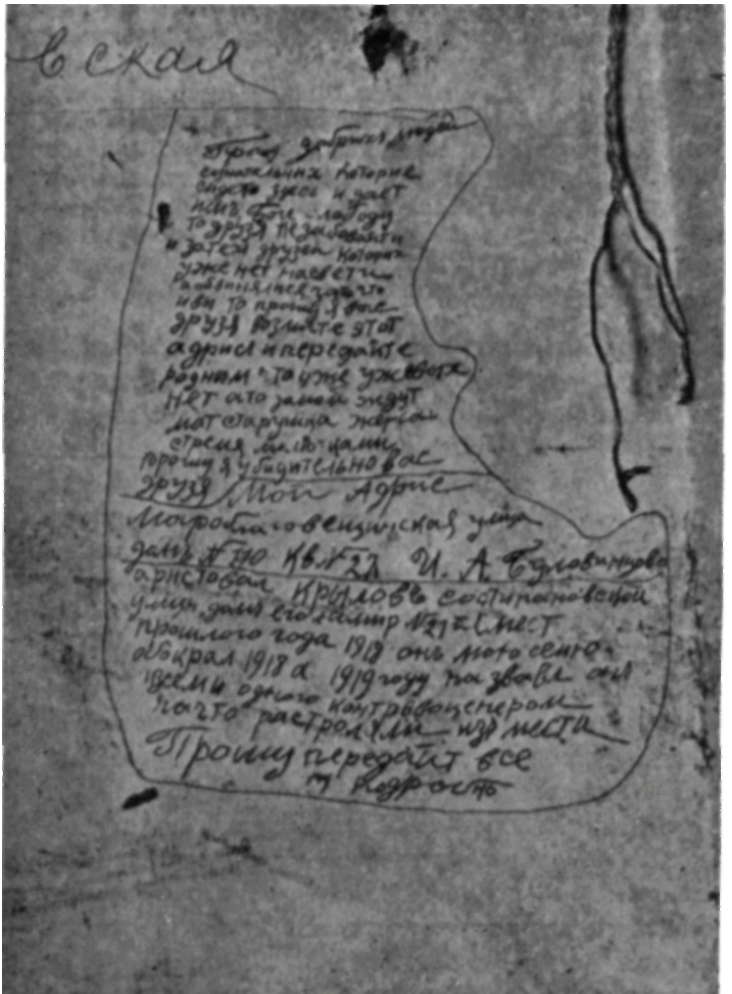
Again, according to an article in The Che-Ka :

Tortures in these districts [Ekaterinodar and Kuban] are both physical and mental. And Ekaterinodar has a particular method of their application, as follows. The victim is laid upon his back on the floor of his dungeon, whilst two burly Che-Ka employees tug at his head, and two others at his shoulders, until the muscles of his neck are absolutely stretched and taut. Then a fifth man falls to beating the victim's neck with a blunt instrument—usually the butt-end of a revolver—until, the neck swelling, blood gushes from the mouth and nostrils, and frightful agony is suffered. And I will tell you also how a Madame Dombrovskaya, an ex-school teacher, was tortured in her solitary confinement cell. It seems that the accusation against her had been that there had been discovered at her house a suit case of officers' clothing which the officer concerned, a relative of hers, had left with her for safe keeping whilst the Denikin regime had been operative in the town. Also, it seems that though Madame Dombrovskaya had confessed to this "crime," the Che-Ka had been informed that she had by her jewellery which another relative, a general, had deposited in her keeping: wherefore on receipt of this fresh information, she was ordered to be tortured until she should reveal where the jewellery might be. For a beginning she was raped and outraged generally—the raping taking place in order of seniority of torturers, with a man called Friedmann raping her first, and the others in regular sequence. And, that done, she was questioned further as to the whereabouts of the jewellery, and further tortured by having incisions made into her body, and her finger tips nipped with pliers and pincers. Until at last, in her agony, with the blood pouring from her wounds, she confessed that the jewels were hidden in an outbuilding of her house. The same evening (the date being November 6) she was shot, and when she had been dead about an hour, one of the Che-Ka's employees searched the outbuilding indicated, and duly found hidden there—a plain gold brooch and a few rings! Again, in a certain Caucasian village the usual instrument of torture was an iron " glove," a solid, glove-shaped piece of metal studded on the outside with nails, and able, when slipped on to the torturer's right hand, to inflict

blows causing not only terrible pain through their mere weight, but also suppuration through the multiplicity of the nail wounds which they produced. This torture was applied to, amongst others, a citizen named Leliavin, a man from whom the Che-Ka desired to obtain information as to the whereabouts of a hoard of Tsarist gold coins which he was reported to have got concealed. As for the town of Armavir, the local Che-Ka's instrument of torture was the " wreath," an ordinary leathern strap into one end of which an iron nut was let, and into the other end a screw, so that, the strap having been fixed around the victim's head, the nut and the screw could be drawn together until the extreme compression of the scalp caused indescribable pain.[1]

In Piatigorsk the head of the local Che-Ka's " operative department " used to accompany " questionings " with strokes from a rubber whip—as many as twenty strokes at a time. Once, also, the fellow ordered some nurses who had rendered first aid to some wounded Cossacks to be given fifteen lashes apiece.[2] It was the practice of this Che-Ka, too, to thrust pins under prisoners' finger-nails. In general, it conducted its " inquiries " on a basis of flagellation with whips and ramrods and clenched fists. We have evidence also that similar treatment was accorded to Admiral Miazgovsky at Nikolaev in 1919; whilst the Dielo once published a statement as to how a citizen of Lougansk had been tortured by having ice-cold water poured over his naked body, and his finger-nails wrenched backward with steel pliers, and his body pricked all over with needles, and slashed with razors.[3] And on another occasion a correspondent of the same journal [4] wrote with regard to Simferopol: " The Che-Ka there has invented new forms of torture by injecting into the rectum enemas

[1] See The Che-Ka, pp. 230 and 231.
[2] Report of the Denikin Commission.
[3] See No. 476 of the Dielo.
[4] In its issue of June 27, 1921.



An inscription written by a prisoner on a cell wall in Kiev.
[See page 168.]

charged with powdered glass, and holding lighted candles beneath the generative organs." In Tsaritsin the victims were variously laid upon a heated grid, thrashed with iron rods or metal-tipped flails of rubber, or subjected to twistings of the arms until the bones were broken.[1]

A whole chapter in Averbuch's book is devoted to the tortures practised in Odessa, with the Che-Ka's system of fetters, confinement in pitch-dark cells, casti-gation with rods a centimetre thick and cat-o'-nine-tails of plaited leather, crushings of hands with pincers, and suspensions by the neck. And amplification of Averbuch's descriptions is to be found in the materials collected by the Denikin Commission, which detail two cases of mock shooting. In the first case the victim was thrust into a crate which already contained a dead body, and shot at so that only one ear was singed—then removed until his tormentors should see fit to repeat the torture; and in the second case the proceedings consisted of forcing the victim to dig what he believed to be his own grave in a condemned cell which had had scratched across one of its walls : " Twenty-seven bodies lie buried here." This second case, of course, was designed to intimidate only; much as when, in a third case, a man was nightly awakened by the jailor, led out into the courtyard, and, on the jailor being bidden to " take him back again, and let him live through the rest of the night," restored to his cell. Also, in Odessa members of the Che-Ka used to visit the cells several times a day, and say mockingly : " By to-night you will have become something different." [2]

[1] Materials collected by the Denikin Commission.

[2] See the materials collected by the Denikin Commission, and also Madame Kourakina's reminiscences in No. 5 of the Rousskaya Lietopis ("Russian Chronicle "), p. 201.

In 1919, when an important trial of political prisoners was proceeding in Moscow, armed guards were posted over the prisoners whilst they were in the cells, and the cells would be periodically visited by female Communists, who said to the guards : " These prisoners are spies. Shoot them at once if they attempt to escape." But most abominable of all were the doings of the female president of the Che-Ka of Penza, a woman called Boche, in the year 1918. They grew so bad that at last the central authorities had to insist upon her retirement. And during the winter of 1920 it was the practice of the twenty-year-old male head of the Che-Ka of Vologda to seat himself on a chair beside the frozen river, have a pile of sacks prepared, send to the gaol for the captives due for the day's "questioning," and, having caused the wretches to be thrust into the sacks, keep them immersed in a hole in the ice whilst he subjected them to examination. But at length his case, like the case of the woman Boche, attracted the notice of the central authorities, and, on his being medically examined, he was found to be insane.

In Tiumen the chief mode of torture was to beat the prisoners with rubber rods.[1] And of the Urals Che-Ka's methods we can form an idea when we read, from the pen of a Madame Froumkina :

Meder was brought into the shed and compelled to kneel down beside one of the walls. Shots then were fired at him —to his right first of all, and then to his left. And then Goldin, the " people's prosecutor," said : " Unless you surrender to us your son, you will be shot. But we shall not shoot you at once. We shall do so only when we have "broken your arms and legs." And the next day this was done.

In the prison of Novocherkassk a " people's prosecutor " once thrust two revolvers into a victim's mouth

[1] See the Rabochnaya Zhizn (" Working-Class Life ") of May, 1918.

Saenko, commandant of the Che-Ka of Kharkov, a notorious torturer and executioner.

[See page 166.]

in such a manner as to hitch the sights upon the victim's teeth, and bring away both them and portions of the gum bones.[1]

Next, consider the execution of General Roussky and his companions, as detailed in the materials collected by the Denikin Commission :

The executioners forced their victims to kneel down and stretch out their necks. Then they slashed at the necks with swords, but in some cases, through inexpertness, failed to deal a fatal blow at the first attempt, and had to deliver five or more blows before the hostage with whom they were dealing finally was slaughtered. It was with his own hand that Artabekov, the head of the Che-Ka, stabbed General Roussky. And some of the victims had their arms and legs cut off before finally having their necks severed.

And now the time has come for me to tell of the "heroic" deeds of Saenko, head of the Che-Ka of Kharkov. This man first came into prominence at the time when, in 1919, the city was occupied by the Bolshevists before their subsequent evacuation of the same. Hundreds of victims then passed through his maniacal, sadistic hands. An eye-witness has related how, when first this witness entered the Che-Ka cells, he was struck with the terrified aspect of the prisoners, and enquired the cause of their fear. Said they : "Saenko has been here, and taken away Syichev and Bielochkin for examination. And he has promised that this evening he will come and see some more of us." And, sure enough, a few minutes later, the Syichev in question, a boy of nineteen, re-entered the cells leaning upon a couple of Red Guards, and looking like a ghost. His comrades cried, " What has been done to you ? " and he replied, "Oh, Saenko has been examining me." His right eye was one huge bruise, his right cheek-

[1] Related by A. Nikolin in No. 9 of the Kazachyi Dumi (" Cossack Opinion ").

bone seemed to have been laid open with a revolver butt, four of his front teeth were missing, his neck was covered with bruises, his left shoulder-blade had been gashed all over, and on his back were thirty-seven contusions and abrasions. And in this manner Saenko had been " examining " victims for five days past, so that in the end one of the victims, the man Bielochkin, died of his injuries in the prison infirmary. A favourite trick of Saenko's was to keep digging the point of a knife into the examinee's body for about a centimetre's distance, and twisting it about. He would do this right in front of the " people's prosecutor " and the rest of the Che-Ka staff.

And to the foregoing the witness has added an account of the executions which Saenko duly carried out, as threatened, on the evening of the day mentioned.

At nine o'clock he entered the cells with an Austrian staff-captain named Klochkovsky. Sodden with drink or drugs, he then ordered three prisoners named Pshenichny, Ovche-renko, and Bielonsov, to be taken out into the courtyard, and, having divested them of their clothing, fell, with "Comrade Klochkovsky," to cutting and stabbing at their naked bodies from the lower portions upwards. Daggers were used for the purpose, and the stabbings made to ascend to the victims' trunks only very gradually. And when he had completed the three executions he returned to the cells and, all covered with blood, said to the rest of the prisoners : " Do you see this blood ? Well, that is the fate which befalls anyone who opposes me and the Workers' and Peasants' Party." And, that said, an employee of the Che-Ka seized hold of Syichev (the lad who had been so cruelly beaten that morning), dragged him out into the yard, and forced him to look at Pshenichny's body. And because the body was still heaving the employee at length killed it outright with a revolver shot; after which he hit Syichev several times with a sword sheath, and drove him back into the cells.

An idea of the mental agonies suffered by prisoners at Kharkov can be gained from inscriptions since found

on the dungeon walls. Such inscriptions are : " For four days past I have been flogged. I lost consciousness, and then was forced to sign a ready-written protocol. I signed it because I could bear the torture no longer " ; and " I have been given 800 strokes with a ramrod, until I am like a piece of raw meat " ; and " At seven o'clock on March 6 -- was shot, aged twenty-three " ; and " What a chamber of suffering this cell is ! " ; and " Abandon hope, all ye who enter here I " And we have further confirmation of the horrors undergone in Kharkov's " chambers of suffering" from survivors' stories, from experiences related by persons who contrived to escape from the Che-Ka's clutches. For the most part, that Che-Ka's "investigations" were conducted at night-time, and accompanied with such threats of flogging and shooting that often enough victims would " confess " to crimes which existed only in the imagination of the Che-Ka's agents. But should even such threats be unsuccessful, " confessions " would be extorted with beatings with ramrods until the victim lost consciousness. Two officials prominent in these doings were an ex-hairdresser's assistant named Miro-shinchenko and an eighteen-year-old youth named Iesel Mankin. Once the former threatened a servant girl named Kanisheva with a revolver until she " confessed " to having harboured some officers ; and once the latter said to a victim as he covered him with his weapon, Your life will depend upon your answering me correctly." And in time the Che-Ka began to add moral tortures to physical: executions began to be carried out in such close proximity to the cells that the other prisoners could plainly hear the rifle shots as they issued from the small, dark kitchen which Saenko had converted into a torture and execution chamber. And when later, in June of the year in question, Denikin's searchers

inspected the room, they found there two pood-weights so tied together with an arshin-long section of rubber piping as to form a kind of flail, with the straw covering of the floor sodden with the blood of the slaughtered, and the wall facing the door seamed and scarred with bullet marks, and the other walls bespattered with blood and fragments of scalp, and hair, and particles of brain, and the floor littered with similar fragments. And when 107 corpses were disinterred in the adjacent concentration camp the most horrible atrocities became revealed—terrible traces of flogging, shattered ribs and leg bones, fractured skulls, amputated hands and feet, heads attached to the trunk only with a strip of cartilage, patches where the skin had been burnt off with red-hot instruments, stripes branded upon the back, and general mutilations.

The first body to be exhumed was the body of Zhako-britsky, an ex-cornet of the 6th Hussars. He must have been cruelly beaten before death, for some of his ribs had been fractured, and there were thirteen scars on the body caused by pressure against some red-hot, circular implement. All the scars were on the front of the body save for a single stripe burnt upon the back. The skull of another corpse was found flattened into a single, smooth, round disk about a centimetre in thickness. Such expatulation of the head could have been caused only by enormous pressure between two flat objects. On a woman whose identity we could not establish we found seven stab and shot wounds. Also, manifestly she had been thrown into the grave before death.

And the Commission discovered corpses of persons who had been scalded from head to foot with boiling liquid, and of persons who had been slowly (beginning with wounds intended only to torture, not to prove of a fatal character) hacked to death.[1] And in every town

[1] These details are taken from the instalment of the Denikin materials published at Rostov-on-Don.

in the region where concealed hiding-places had been available were corpses in a similar condition brought to light. Particularly was this the case at Odessa, Nikolaev, and Tsaritsin. True, where some corpses with fractured skulls were found in a quarry near the first-mentioned place, the fractures may have been caused by a fall, and what seemed external traces of torture may have been due to prolonged contact with the soil, and the conclusions of the examining doctors may have been made through inability to distinguish between ante-mortem changes and post-mortem, between macerations and scald wounds, between testicles swollen with decomposition and testicles ruptured before death; yet, even so, testimony both oral and photographic goes to show that no natural cause whatsoever could have caused the corpses to look as they did when at length exhumation brought them to light. Again, granted that some of the tales of physical tortures equal to those practised by the Inquisition in Spain may have been exaggerations, our conscience is not likely to feel relieved by knowing that tortures in Russia of the twentieth century can be a degree, but only a degree, less cruel than tortures in Spain of the centuries of the Inquisition; and though one may draw a certain moral satisfaction from the circumstance that the staff of the Anatomical Theatre to which the Che-Ka of Odessa sent some of the corpses of its victims testified that none of those corpses " bore traces of physical violence," one will scarcely feel satisfied that no tortures at all were practised in Odessa, or do more than conclude that the number of cases in which torture was inflicted may have been small in comparison with the huge total of victims, or that, as luck would have it, no corpses of tortured had happened to be sent to the Theatre concerned. Moreover, it may be added that in most

instances the evidence relating to torture that was given before the Denikin Commission came from persons who might justifiably be supposed to have been pro-Bolshevist in their sympathies.

But to return to Saenko's exploits in Kharkov. An ex-prisoner of Kharkov, a Social Revolutionary, has written [1] :

In proportion as Denikin's forces drew nearer to the town, the bloodthirsty hysteria of the local Che-Ka increased. And it was then that the real " hero " made his appearance upon the scene. This was Saenko, a man originally a minor official, a member of the local revolutionary tribunal, but now notorious amongst his panic-stricken fellows, and one who held in his hand the lives of all the prisoners in the place. Nightly his motor-car would drive up to the prison to remove inmates. Usually he shot them with his own hand, and once he shot a patient suffering from typhus. A fellow small of stature, with the whites of his eyes gleaming prominently, and his features constantly on the twitch, this Saenko would brandish a revolver in his trembling hand, and rush about the building like a madman. At first he selected for his victims only persons who had actually been sentenced ; but during the two days immediately preceding the evacuation he took to selecting his victims indiscriminately from the prisoners at large, and then and there driving them out into the yard, and hitting at them with the flat of his sword as they went. And on the last day of all (though by then the gaol had become strangely silent) the place resounded with volley and individual firing from early morning until late at night—the small prison-yard seeing slaughtered, on that day, 120 persons.

Such the narrative of one of the twenty or thirty prisoners who were fortunate enough subsequently to be evacuated. And another ex-prisoner has given us a description of the previous sorting-out—a terrible process which lasted for three hours:

The rest of us were made to wait in the office whilst the whole odious examination took place. An over-dressed

[1] In The Kremlin from behind Prison Bars, p. 187.

youth entered the office from an adjoining room, a name was called out, and a party of Red Guards proceeded to the proper cell. As we waited we could picture to ourselves the dungeons and their two thousand half-alive, half-dead inmates stretched upon wretched bunks—tossing to and fro in agonised anticipation—tossing to and fro amid a silence of night broken only by gun-fire close to the town, and by single revolver shots from the horrible shambles where human beings were being done to death ! . . . Presently a door could be heard opening in the corridor, and we knew that to a confused accompaniment of heavy footsteps, groundings of rifle-butts, and the rattle of a lock, someone was raising aloft a lantern, and someone else searching lists with a gnarled finger, and someone else—lying upon a bunk, and trembling with a trembling that convulsed both heart and brain. ... " Is it I ? " . . . A name would be called. Then slowly, very slowly, fear would temporarily release its grip—temporarily the heart would begin to beat more evenly. ..." Is it I ? "No. Not, at all events, yet. Then the person summoned would begin to dress himself with fingers benumbed with terror, unequal to the task. Upon that a Red Guard would tell him to make haste. " Hurry up ! " the Guard would repeat. " There is no time to waste." . . . How many victims passed before us during those three hours I do not know, or should find it difficult to say. I only know that many, many, many did so pass before us—men more dead than alive, men walking with unseeing eyes. Nor did their " trial " take long. " Trial," indeed ! It consisted merely of the head of the tribunal (or his secretary, dressed in a smart tunic) looking at some lists and saying "Remove him." Whereupon the condemned was led out of the office by another door.

And take this description of the horrible incidents of the Kharkov prison evacuation, as given in the Denikin materials :

Soon after midnight on June 9, the prisoners in the concentration camp in Chaikovskaya Street were awakened by a sound of shots within the prison, and long, as they listened, could hear firing, and footsteps of warders in the corridors, and snappings of bolts, and the heavy, lagging tread of

condemned as they were taken from the cells, and Saenko and his assistants marching from door to door, and the officials calling out names, and " Come out, you ! " and " Collect your things ! " so loudly that they must have been audible even in the farthest dungeons. . . . And automatically, one after another, too weary in body and soul to protest, the condemned rose, and crept towards the doorway leading to the staircase of death. And presently, clad only in their shirts, or altogether naked, they knelt down before a large, newly-dug grave. And, lastly, Saenko, Edward, and Bonda-venko moved from prisoner to prisoner, and methodically shot each of them through the back of the head, so that blood and brains came flying from the shattered skulls, and body after body sank forward upon their still warm predecessors. . . . The executions lasted for more than three hours, and over fifty persons were put to death. And next morning, when news of the executions reached the inhabitants, and friends and relatives of the deceased assembled in Chaikovskaya Street, and were standing there, suddenly the doors of the kommandatur flew open, and there issued thence two shabbily dressed men, with Saenko and Ostapenko, armed with revolvers, behind them. And just as the two unknown men reached the halfway point of the plank spanning a large, open grave beside the prison wall, two shots caught them, and they sank forward. . . . Finally Saenko dispersed the crowd by having them beaten with rifle-butts—he himself shouting: " Do not be afraid that I am not going to bring the Red Terror to an end ! I am going to bring it to an end by shooting every one of you."

The same eye-witness [1] has described also the journey from Kharkov to Moscow. And what he says confirms our information concerning Saenko, since he relates how the latter shot further prisoners en route. And confirmation is to be found also in the Denikin materials. Our eye-witness says :

Stories concerning Saenko are still current in Kharkov, and represent no more than the truth. Once I myself saw him shoot a sick prisoner on a stretcher; whilst on another

[1] He was the well-known Social Revolutionary Karelin.

Inscriptions written by prisoners on a cell wall in Kiev.

[See page 174.]

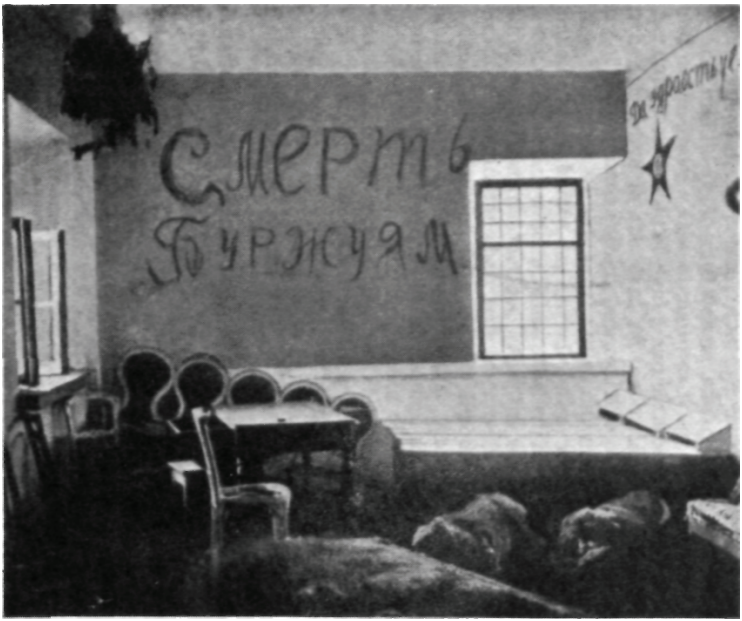
occasion he killed a prisoner with a dagger in the presence of a comrade of ours, who subsequently told us of the deed. Also, once when one of a party of prisoners who were in his custody managed to escape, he atoned for that contretemps by shooting the first upon whom his eye happened to alight. He was a man whose eyes were always bleary and inflamed, like the eyes of a man under the influence of either morphia or cocaine. And whenever he was in this state the symptoms of his sadism would become more than ever pronounced.

And Nilostonsky's book, Der Blutrausch des Bolschewismus (a work based mostly upon the findings of the Rohrberg Commission, which carried out its investigations immediately after the occupation of Kiev by the Volunteer Army during the August of 1919), gives us an even more harrowing picture:

On the eve of the evacuation of Kiev every possible victim was murdered by the Che-Ka. During the night of August 26, 1919, at 5 Sadovaya Street, no fewer than 127 persons were done to death by the provincial Che-Ka, whilst (as there was little time to spare) 100 others were shot in the garden of the Che-Ka building proper, and seventy in the building in Elizabetinskaya Street, and as many more on the premises of the Chinese Che-Ka, and fifty-one railway-men on the premises of the railway Che-Ka, and others in buildings belonging to the tribunals of Kiev. The primary reason for these butcheries was a desire to have no prisoners at all to remove, and the secondary reason a lust to wreak vengeance in return for Denikin's successful advance. In one lot of Che-Ka buildings some prisoners were still found alive, since the Bolshevists had been in such a hurry as to be forced to abandon them. And terrible their condition was when found! They looked like corpses, and could scarcely move, but gazed at us with fixed, unseeing eyes.

And with that Nilostonsky goes on to describe the appearance of a " human slaughter-house " (he asserts that that had come actually to be the official appellation of such places) when, later, the Denikin Commission inspected one.

The place had formerly been a garage, and then the provincial Che-Ka's main slaughter-house. And the whole of it was coated with blood—blood ankle deep, coagulated with the heat of the atmosphere, and horribly mixed with human brains, chips of skull-bone, wisps of hair, and the like. Even the walls were bespattered with blood and similar fragments of brain and scalp, as well as riddled with thousands of bullet holes. In the centre was a drain about a quarter of a metre deep and wide, and about ten metres long. This led to the sanitary system of the neighbouring house, but was choked to the brim with blood. The horrible den contained 127 corpses, but the victims of the previous massacre had been hurriedly buried in the adjacent garden. What struck us most about the corpses was the shattering of their skulls, or the complete flattening out of those skulls, as though the victims had been brained with some such instrument as a heavy block. And there were corpses the heads of which were altogether missing. But in these cases the missing heads cannot possibly have been cut off. They must have been wrenched off. In the main, bodies were identifiable only if they still had left on them some such mark as a set of gold-mounted teeth—left, of course, only because the Bolshevists had not had time to extract it. And in every case the corpses were naked. Also, though it had been the Bolshevists' rule to load their victims on to wagons and lorries as soon as massacred, and take them outside the town for burial, we found that a corner of the garden near the grave already described had in it another, older grave, and that this second grave contained eighty bodies which in every instance bore almost unimaginably horrible wounds and mutilations. In this grave we found corpses with, variously, entrails ripped out, no limbs remaining (as though the bodies had literally been chopped up), eyes gouged out, and heads and necks and faces and trunks all studded with stab wounds. Again, we found a body which had had a pointed stake driven through its chest, whilst in several cases the tongue was missing. And placed together in one corner of the grave we found a medley of detached arms and legs, as well as, near the garden fence, some corpses which bore no sign at all of death by violence. It was only a few days later that, on these unmarked bodies being subjected to post-mortem examina-



A torture-chamber at Kiev, with " Death to the Bourgeoisie I " scrawled across a wall.

[See page 176.]

tion, our doctor discovered their mouths and throats and lungs to be choked with earth. Clearly the unfortunate wretches had been buried alive, and drawn the earth into their respiratory organs through their desperate efforts to breathe. And it was persons of all ages and of both sexes— old, and middle-aged, and women and children—that we found in the grave. One woman was lying tied with a rope to her daughter, a child of eight; and both bore shot wounds. Further, a grave in the yard of the building yielded the body of a Lieutenant Sorokin (accused of espionage on behalf of the Volunteer Army) and the cross on which he had been crucified a week before our arrival. Also, we found a chair like a dentist's chair which still had attached to it straps for the binding of its tortured victims. And the whole of the concrete floor around the chair was smeared with blood, and the chair itself studded with clots of blood, and fragments of human skin, and bits of hairy scalp. And the same with the premises of the district Che-Ka, where, similarly, the floor was caked with blood and fragments of bone and brain. There, too, a conspicuous object was the wooden block upon which the victims had had to lay their heads for the purpose of being brained with a crowbar, with, in the floor beside it, a traphole filled to the brim with human brain-matter from the shattering of the skulls.

Again, here is a description of a form of torture which the Chinese Che-Ka of Kiev employed :

The person to be tortured was first of all tied to a wall or a stake. Then an iron tube a few inches in diameter was clamped to him by one of its ends, and a live rat inserted into the other end, and the end covered over with wire netting, and the tube held over a flame until the rat became so maddened by the heat as to attempt at all costs to escape by gnawing its way out through the human victim's body. And so the torture would be continued for hours— sometimes all through the night into the following day, and in any event until the victim died. And the Commission found that the following form of torture also had been employed in Kiev. The person to be tortured had been buried to the neck in the ground, and left there until consciousness had failed, when he had been dug out again.

And then he had been re-buried to the neck until once more unconsciousness had supervened. And so on, and so on, indefinitely. And inasmuch as the Bolshevists had been treating some victims in this manner just before they evacuated Kiev, they had, in the hurry of their departure, left some of the victims in status quo—to be dug out, of course, by the Volunteers.

In fact, each Che-Ka seems to have had its speciality in torture. Kharkov, for instance, under Saenko, went in primarily for scalpings and hand flayings; and in Voronezh the person to be tortured was first stripped naked, and then thrust into a nail-studded barrel, and rolled about in it, or else branded on the forehead with a five-pointed star, or, if a member of the clergy, " crowned " with barbed wire. As for the Che-Kas of Tsaritsin and Kamishin, it was their custom to saw their victims' bones apart, whilst Poltava and Kremenchoug made it their special rule to impale clergy (once, in the latter place, where a ruffian named Grishka was in command, eighteen monks were transfixed in a single day). Also, inhabitants have testified that Grishka would burn at the stake any peasant who had been prominent in a rebellion, and sit on a chair to enjoy the spectacle. The Che-Ka of Ekaterinoslav, again, went in for crucifixion and death by stoning, and the Che-Ka of Odessa for putting officers to death by chaining them to planks, and slowly, very slowly, pushing them into furnaces, or else tearing their bodies on a capstan wheel, or else immersing them in a boiler of water heated to simmering point, and then flinging them into the sea, before finally consigning them to the flames again.

In fact, the list of tortures is endless. Another Kievan method was to thrust the living victim into a rough coffin already containing a decomposing body, and to fire shots over him as he lay there, and then inform

A corner of a coach-house on the premises of one of the Kievan Che-Kas where prisoners were shot. The floor is littered with chips of skull bone, clots of brain, etc.

[See page 178.]

him that he was going to be buried, and bury him (with the decomposing body) for about half an hour, and, lastly, disinter him again for further " questioning." And, seeing that all this might be repeated more than once, can we wonder that sometimes the victim lost his reason ?

Similarly, the well-known report of the Kievan Sisters of Mercy mentions the local practice of locking up living prisoners with dead. And the statement is confirmed by a Latvian lady who was imprisoned for " espionage " in 1920, and has related that, after being flogged with a whip, and having her finger-tips pounded with an iron implement, and her head screwed into an iron circlet, she was pushed into a cellar.

Very soon the dim light of the electric globe enabled me to realise that I was standing amongst corpses, and to recognise the corpse of an acquaintance of my own, of a lady who had been shot the previous day ! And everything had blood upon it, so that all my garments became stained. . . . At last my surroundings horrified me to the point that I could feel cold sweat break out on my brow. . . . What happened next I do not know. I only know that when I regained consciousness I was back in my own cell.[1]

The following is an extract from a statement issued from the central bureau of the Social Revolutionary Party:

In Kerensk victims usually were tortured with subjection to sudden changes of temperature. First they were put into a steaming bathhouse, and then led forth, naked, into the snow. And at Alexievskoe and other villages in Voronezh Province the victims would similarly be taken naked into the winter-bound street, and soused with cold water until they became living statues of ice. And at

[1] These details are taken from the foreign journal, Brihwa Seme. If I have quoted the title of the journal wrongly, the fact is due to my having been able to make but a hasty extract from it whilst I was still living in Moscow.

Armavir the "death wreath" was the implement most used. That is to say, the victim would have his head encircled with a leather strap fitted at the ends with an iron nut and a screw, and the nut and the screw be joined together, and the head increasingly compressed. Lastly, the Che-Ka of a Caucasian stanitya used an iron-studded "glove " that was made to be worn on the executioner's hand.

In his book Russia during Four Years of Revolution S. S. Maslov writes :

Possibly the reader may say that these instances of cruelty were isolated instances ; but alas, and to humanity's shame, they were not so. For example, the practice of transforming living persons into statues of ice was widespread in Orel Province whenever levyings of " extraordinary revolutionary tax " were toward; and once in the Malo-Archangel district the tax-gathering detachment placed a merchant named Yinshkevich upon a red-hot stove until his due was paid; and in Voronezh Province, in 1920, some peasants who were in arrears with their food-tax were subjected to the method of "persuasion " of being let down a well, immersed at the bottom of it, brought up, and once more plied with demands for payment of the tax in full.

In passing it may be said that this author did not go solely to "counter-revolutionary" sources for his information, but collected information also from fellow-prisoners of the Democratic and Socialist Parties.

In the present supposedly civilised age one would rejoice to be able to believe that some of these stories were exaggerations; but to do so is difficult when whole companies of persons stand vouchers for them. A trustworthy correspondent of the Dni of May 13, 1923, writes thus concerning Georgia and the Transcaucasian Che-Ka:

The Che-Ka confines its prisoners in damp, deep, hidden dungeons for weeks at a time, and meanwhile leaves them practically without food, and practically even without water. And beds and tables and chairs are not to be found in those

dungeons, but instead, the captives have to lie on a floor compounded of knee-deep mud and blood, and nightly to do battle with the rats. And if even those surroundings fail to affect a prisoner, he is taken downstairs to a lower, a wholly pitch-dark cellar of a kind to make the blood congeal in his veins and render him insensible with the cold. And then he is taken upstairs again, and once more told to inform against his associates and organisation. And if he should still prove recalcitrant he is a second time relegated to the cellar—and so on until he either dies or reveals the " information " required, no matter how improbable that "information " may be. And in other cases victims will be awakened by Che-Ka agents in the small hours of the morning, and taken into the courtyard, and subjected to a blank volley or two in imitation of a real execution, and lastly, half alive and half-dead, relegated to the cellar. Of late, too, much use has been made of the "wreath of death." Rakaobadye, the Social Democrat, was subjected to the torture until he agreed to enter the Che-Ka's service, but later regained his freedom, and told his comrades of his experiences.[1]

Sometimes denunciations of tortures inflicted during "investigations " appeared even in the Soviet press itself. Especially was this the case in the early days of Bolshevism, before the usurping Party's members had all ceased to be shocked by the fact that outrage and violence were perpetrated in their " Socialist-run " prisons. In a letter "Do medieval torture chambers still exist? " which was dispatched to the Muscovite Izvestia on January 26, 1919, by a Communist who had been arrested, and temporarily interned, through an error, the writer stated :

My arrest was accidental, and came about through the fact that I happened to be discovered in a house where (as I learnt later) counterfeit Kerensky notes had been

[1] From the Appeal issued by the Georgian Social Democrats on July 5, 1923, as reprinted in No. 15 of the Socialistichesky Vestnik.

manufactured. But, for all that, I had to spend ten days in prison before the authorities even questioned me, and meanwhile I suffered greatly in mind.

And, next, speaking of the " Investigatory Commission" attached to one of the quarters of the city of Moscow, the writer said :

Persons in that prison were flogged until their senses left them, and then, still unconscious, taken down to a cellar which had been the refrigerator chamber, and thenceforth beaten for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four. Things of the sort so impressed me that I nearly lost my reason.

Again, in the Pravda of March, 1919, we are informed that the Che-Ka of Vladimir kept a special den for " pricking prisoners' heels with needles," and that when an imprisoned Communist appealed to public opinion with the words, " One is as much afraid to live as to work, now that even the most reputable of workers may at any time, if domiciled in the provinces, find himself in the position in which I am now," the matter only attracted official attention because a Communist happened to be concerned, whereas thousands of similar cases had already been passed over in silence. " I blush for your torture chamber," also wrote L. Reisner to the Che-Ka of Petrograd in December 1918. But his words were looked upon as "sentimentality," and few protesting voices joined in, and even they speedily gave way to the chorus. In February, 1919, the Pravda cited a case which it roundly declared to illustrate the actual advantages of mock shootings : the case being one of a well-to-do peasant who had refused to meet a requisitional order for 20 poods-weight of grain by way of " extraordinary food tax," and had been imprisoned, and still refused to pay, and had then been stood up against the local churchyard

wall, and again refused to pay, and, lastly, had had a shot fired about his ears, and—oh, miracle of miracles ! —at length agreed to pay what was owing.

An equally amazing item is to be found in the Che-Ka's Weekly,—an item which furnishes us with yet further historical proof of our point, and was headed " Why does the Che-Ka hesitate?"

Tell us [asked the signatories of the article—the head of the Che-Ka of Nolinsk, and others] why you did not subject that fellow Lockhart[1] to the most refined of all possible tortures, and thereby wrest from him the information which we require, and also the budget of valuable addresses which such an official always possesses ? Why, we repeat, did you allow him to leave your premises without having been subjected to such tortures as would have made the blood of every counter-revolutionary in the land run cold ? . . . . Away with such shilly-shallying! When a dangerous rascal has been caught he should have all the information possible extracted from him, and then be dispatched to a better world."

This was an article in an official journal,[2] and that journal the very journal which purported to be " imparting wise direction to the activities of local Che-Kas, and propagating the ideas and methods of warfare which the All-Russian Che-Ka itself employs " ! However, at the sixth Congress of Soviets the representatives of the All-Russian Che-Ka assented to this by saying: " We recognise that it is time for shillyshallying and namby-pamby methods to be eliminated from our dealings with the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie's servants."

Hence, from the moment when the Che-Ka's slogan of " Show no mercy to the bourgeois rabble ! " first rang out in the provinces that slogan was bound to

[1] The then British Consul in Petrograd.

[2] The article is to be found in the Weekly of October 6, 1918.

be interpreted by the provincial officials as at once a call for and a sanction of cruelty, and to nullify in advance the Che-Ka's subsequent instructions that a watch be kept over the " legality " of the proceedings of provincial executive committees. And this was the more bound to be so because those instructions were theoretical rather than practical.[1] For the provinces, of course, took their cue from the centre, where, as British reports have stated, a precedent for torture was set in the torturing of Kannegiesser, the assassin of Uritsky. But is it, or is it not, the case that Madame Kaplau, the assailant of Lenin, also was tortured ? At all events, rumours to that effect gained currency in Moscow; and though I cannot, for my own part, feel sure on the point, I do know this much: that one night whilst I was lying in the Butyrka, a night which I now believe to have been the night immediately following the Lenin attempt, we could hear that someone was being tortured in the building, and long lay listening to the sounds. Also, although, in those days, it was as unusual for news of torturings to reach the public ear as it is now, I did at least hear of the " safes trial " in August, 1920, and learn about the details of seating the victims upon ice (and the rest) which were laid before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal. And the picture becomes more vivid still when we read of the great political trial in Turkhestan in October, 1919, when the accused, to the number of twelve or so, repudiated the evidence which they were alleged previously to have given before the local Che-Ka, and pointed out that their signatures to the " confessions " had been extorted through torture, and thus caused the Tribunal to question the " special detachment "

[1] They were issued on March 3, 1919, as confirmed by P. Mayer's reminiscences of his former service in the Commissariat of Justice.

Kharkov victims.

[See page 188.]

of the Che-Ka which had inflicted the torture, and thereby to elicit the fact that torture had been a regular item of that Che-Ka's routine. " Upon this," a correspondent of the Volya Rossii [1] who was present has said, " sobs and cries arose in the hall, and made the building re-echo : " with the result that the judges disregarded the fact that the counsel for the prosecution dubbed the protests " mere bourgeois lamentations," and uttered a formal condemnation of what had been done.

And only recently the Izvestia [2] of Moscow reported a session of the provincial court of Omsk at which there were tried one Hermann, commandant of the district militia at Sherbanov, a fellow militiaman of his, and a Dr. Troitsky on a charge of having tortured prisoners during examination by pouring hot sealing-wax upon the victims' palms, arms, necks, and scalps, and then tearing away the wax, and, with it, whole patches of skin. "We cannot," the President of the Court moralised, " tolerate such methods of inquiry, for they are worthy, rather, of the Spanish Inquisition." Yet they were "methods of inquiry" which had received practically the sanction of "law," and we gain additional information of value on the subject from the Socialistichesky Vestnik. To that journal a correspondent wrote :

Last spring persistent rumours and disclosures of certain occurrences caused the provincial court of Stavropol to appoint a special commission of enquiry into torturings said to have been inflicted by the local criminal investigation department. . . . The commission found that, in addition to floggings, suspensions, and other physical violence, the following means of torment had been employed. (a) First of all there had been confinement in " the hot cellar," a dark, sunken cell three paces long, and one-

[1] Of December 7, 1920. [2] Of December 12, 1923.

and-a-half paces wide, with the floor of the cell cut into steps. For purposes of torment as many as eighteen persons at once had been placed in this cell, so that, there not being standing-room for them all, some of them had had to remain constantly supported upon their companions' shoulders whilst the atmosphere had been such that a lamp would not burn in it, nor matches strike. Yet the prisoners had been left there for from forty-eight to seventy-two hours and, meanwhile, given neither food nor water, nor yet permission to leave the cell for natural purposes. And even women, as well as men, had been incarcerated there—a case in point being a certain Madame Weitzmann. (b) Secondly, there had been confinement in "the cold cellar," a vault communicating with the shaft of a disused icehouse. In this case prisoners had been wholly divested of their clothing, and lowered into the shaft of the icehouse on a sliding ladder; after which the ladder had been withdrawn, and cold water poured upon the prisoners. And this torture had been inflicted even during seasons of severe frost, and in some cases included pourings of as many as eight bucketfuls of water upon a single prisoner. ...(c) Thirdly, there had been measurement [compression] of the skull.

Also, it appeared that this criminal investigation department had been shooting prisoners for alleged attempts to escape, and, in the April of 1922, used the pretext for putting to death, in particular, a certain Mastriukov. In fact, when the commission of inquiry issued its findings they were findings based upon testimony both of victims and of eye-witnesses, upon discoveries made by qualified medical men, upon results of post-mortem examinations, and upon confessions of Che-Ka employees, the actual inflicters of the tortures —the plea of these last being that they had acted only on the express orders of a certain Grigorovich who was head of the local C.I.D., head of the local executive committee, and head of the local provincial committee of the Communist Party. Also, they said, they had received instructions from Povetsky,

Grigorovich's assistant, and from Topishev, judicial adviser to the C.I.D., and carried out the tortures with these two officials' personal help. Yet, though the commission ordered the persons inculpated to be arrested and proceeded against, their arrest was found to be impracticable owing to the fact that a certain Cherno-brovy, head of the local O.G.P.U., concealed them for a while on premises attached to his official quarters, and then produced in their justification a secret circular issued by the Central Che-Ka itself which laid it down that if, during a process of " investigation " of prisoners, or a preliminary enquiry with regard to prisoners, the latter should resist circumstantial evidence, confrontation, and " threats," and refuse to confess to their imputed crimes, " the old and proven remedy "should be applied to them. The origin of the circular had, apparently, been as follows. During the summer of 1921 Voul, a notorious " people's prosecutor" attached to the Che-Ka of Moscow, had been accused of employing inquisitional torture and violence, and, upon that, had threatened to send in his resignation on the ground that, should torture be debarred him, he would not be responsible for preventing any further increase of " banditism " in Moscow : and this threat had so frightened Menzhinsky that the latter had forthwith accorded Voul licence to pursue his inquisitional methods as before, and issued the foregoing " old and proven remedy " circular. Hence the usual result happened, and none of the Stavropol officials who had employed torture were arrested—the only persons to be arrested being persons who had displayed an altogether uncalled-for amount of zeal and initiative in probing Stavropol's criminal-investigatory mysteries ! And we have detailed confirmation of this from a letter published in No. 1 of the journal Pouti Revolutsyi (" Roads to

Revolution "), one of the Left Social Revolutionary Party's journals.

Akin to the Stavropol business was a Turkhestan affair. In Turkhestan the chief inflicter of torture was, for a while, an ex-circus clown named Drozhin, a member of, and an executioner employed by, the local Che-Ka. In time, however, this man was dismissed from his post on a torture charge—only to be reappointed, on the strength of his record as a " questioner," to the post of local political commissary.[1] And how we can imagine the exploits of the ex-circus clown in his new role ! Not that we know very much about his exploits in that particular quarter of the world. What we do know about him is his career in a kindred sphere at the other end of Russia, at Archangel. I have before quoted a report in The Che-Ka dealing with the concentration camp at Kholmogory; and although I am not personally aware of the identity of the author of the report, of the man who, in the face of every possible danger and difficulty, travelled to the far North to collect for himself authentic information concerning horrors which had reached our ears even in Moscow, it was in Moscow that subsequently he sought for means of assistance for the unfortunate prisoners in the " Camp of Death," and I was present when a paper was read on his behalf. The paper proved to be even more terrible than his report had been : so much so that we sat petrified, and realised at once that no possible means of help was conceivable. And if I cite a few details from the paper, they will help the reader to realise what life conditions were in that inferno of a camp.

[1] And, if I am not mistaken, rewarded with "the Order of the Red Flag." See Digest No. 344 of the digests compiled by Denikin's Staff.

Human "gloves," Hayings of human hands, found in a torture chamber at Kharkov after the Bolshevists' departure.

[See page 196.]

So long as the abominably cruel Bakhoulis was commandant of the place, persons were shot in large numbers for purely trivial offences. Truly detestable are the tales told of him ! Amongst other things, he made it his practice to divide his prisoners into groups of ten, and punish a whole group if any one of its members committed an offence. Once a member of a group escaped, and could not be found ; whereupon the other nine were shot forthwith ; and when the actual offender himself was caught he also received a sentence of death, and was led to the side of a ready-dug grave, and cursed at for a while by the commandant, and, lastly, hit over the head in such a manner as to fall, half-stunned, into the grave, and be buried alive. This incident I had from one of the camp guards themselves. Later, when Bakhoulis had been transferred to the command of the camp at Portaminsk, the most northerly camp of all (situated about a hundred versts north of Archangel), he continued his Kholmogory practices there, and caused the prisoners to be fed upon dried fish alone (so that they never saw bread) and, in general, gave full rein to his cruelty. In particular it is said that of 200 prisoners whom he removed thither from Kholmogory very few survived. I found the very name of Portaminsk to inspire captives with fear, so much had the name come to mean practically a death sentence. Yet the conditions of Portaminsk differed little from those obtaining at Kholmogory.[1]

Further details as to life in the Portaminsk disused Monastery reach us in a private letter secretly conveyed to Petrograd.[2]

Once, as we were starting work at six o'clock in the morning, and had not yet left the courtyard, one of the prisoners, a man recently recovered from typhus, and therefore still weak from the attack, fainted away: whereupon the commandant declared him not to be genuinely ill, and, to punish him for " malingering," had him stripped stark naked, thrust into an icy-cold cell, and pelted with snow. Later the man died of the chill then caught.

[1] See The Che-Ka, pp. 242, 243.

[2] And published in No. 2 of the Revolutsionnoye Dielo.

Also the writer records how a sick man who failed to keep up with a prison convoy proceeding from one village to another was shot before his comrades' very-eyes. And another eye-witness has written:

The following may give you an idea of the abominations committed here. Whilst some prisoners were digging sand for building purposes in front of the commandant's house he noticed that they sat down for a rest. Accordingly, without moving from his place at the window, he drew his revolver, fired, and killed and wounded several of the party. Upon that the prisoners went on hunger strike ; and on this coming to the ears of Moscow, a commission of enquiry was dispatched to Portaminsk, and the commandant removed. But the new commandant, a sailor from the "Gangut," is just as cruel as his predecessor, and haphazard shootings of prisoners by guards before their comrades' eyes are as common as ever.

The mere fact that in six months, during the years 1921 and 1922, 442 prisoners out of 1200 died should show us what were the conditions of confinement in the North.

At Kholmogory prisoners would be thrown into a pitch-dark cell, or confined in buildings known respectively as "the cold tower" and "the white house"— the latter an isolated edifice the one small room of which had no lavatory attached, and at times would be made to hold as many as forty persons. Typhus patients confined there had to spend the ten days before the "crisis" of the malady without any sort of medical attention, and it was quite a common thing for prisoners to lose their reason whilst in the building.

And since we in Moscow could gain only fragmentary news of such happenings, and were ourselves in the power of officials who stood indemnified against punishment for their acts, how could we voice a protest with safety, even if it had been possible for us to voice one? More

than once during my time in the Butyrka Gaol I have known prisoners whom I had seen undergoing ill-treatment whilst under examination subsequently beseech me to keep silence on the subject. The prison doctors themselves were forbidden to disclose that floggings of prisoners were being practised, and once when a Dr. Sheglov gave some Socialists a certificate that they had been subjected to physical outrage he was sent into exile at Archangel, and allotted for his portion of hard labour the task of clearing away sanitary refuse. Of floggings outside the prison we did hear news, whilst also we heard of a Social Democrat named Treigav being thrust into a cell which measured three paces by two, and made to share it with a Chinese lunatic who had homicidal mania. These and other instances of the sort are to be found detailed in Nos. 1 and 14 of Revolutsionnaya Rossia. Again, a letter secretly conveyed to Us from a Left Social Revolutionary named Shebalin told how he had been tortured (in Petrograd) by having his arms and legs beaten with a revolver butt, his eye-sockets and testicles prodded and compressed until he had swooned with the agony, and his body flogged in such a manner as to leave no weals or blood, but cause the blood of the flagellation to pour from his throat alone.[1] And similar to his statements concerning compression of the testicles was evidence given by Sinovary before the tribunal at Lausanne. Besides, I myself knew Shebalin, who for six months had been my fellow-prisoner in the Butyrka, and therefore can testify that he was a man incapable of telling a lie, or even of exaggerating.

I can assure you (he wrote), that this letter is being sent to you from a torture establishment the rigime and the resources of which outdo even those of the ancient " Bastilles

[1] See the Ponti Revolutsyi of April 9, 1922.

of Russia," the Fortress of Schlusselburg and the Fortress of Petropavlovsk—in both of which I have been imprisoned for offending the Imperial Crown.

Also, the letter mentioned certain cunningly devised cells which had just been contrived on the Gorokhovaya Street premises of the Petrograd Che-Ka—little cramped, icy-cold rooms walled with double linings of cork so as to prevent all sounds whatsoever from reaching the outside world. And there, our informant said, prisoners were " questioned " by being frozen and burnt and otherwise tortured—usually for between five and ten days at a stretch, or even for a month.[1] And in a book written abroad, but based primarily upon materials which the author had brought with him from Russia, S. S. Maslov has stated that it was a common, almost a universal, thing for prisoners to be kicked and beaten with rifle and revolver butts all over their bodies. Also, he cites an instance of barbarism which is the more characteristic of the Bolshevist " justice," whose principles are so enthusiastically extolled in the Soviet press as "tending less to punish than to reform " in that the instance had no sort of relation to politics.

In Moscow, during the May of 1920, some juvenile pickpockets of from eleven to fifteen years of age were arrested, thrown into a cellar on the Che-Ka's premises, and kept separate from the rest of the prisoners. For the Che-Ka had decided to put these children to an official use, and obtain, through them, the names of pickpockets with whom the children had associated in the past. Yet, though the authorities cajoled and threatened, the children persisted in saying that they knew nothing whatsoever on the subject, and all inquiries proved fruitless. Next, employees of the

[1] In an issue of the Rabochy Listok or " Workers' Sheet" we find mention of the Petrograd Che-Ka putting prisoners into fetters pending inquiry, whilst No. 5 of the Socialistichesky Vestnik tells of prisoners being sent to lunatic asylums for confinement with dangerous maniacs.

Che-Ka entered the cell, and beat the children with their fists, and, as the victims fell under the blows, stamped upon them with their heels. And then the children did promise to inform against their late companions, but, never having known those companions' real names, had to be driven about the streets in motor-cars and tram-cars, or else taken to the railway stations, on the chance that, en route, they might be able to point out one or more of the culprits wanted. And though on the first day the children persistently avoided denunciation of any former comrades, they were so cruelly beaten for this when they returned to the Che-Ka building in the evening, and every evening afterwards, that at last they did begin to betray old associates, and then, through fear of further floggings, even to inform against perfectly innocent persons, persons whom they had never known at all. And when this had been going on for three weeks or so, orders were received for the children to be transferred from the premises of the Che-Ka to the Butyrka Gaol: by which time the children were emaciated, bruised all over, clad in rags, stamped with fear until they had come to look like little animals constantly confronting death, given to trembling, and apt to moan and weep even during their sleep at night. Then, after two or three weeks in the Butyrka Gaol, orders came for them to be restored to the Che-Ka premises : and I have since been told by prisoners who had often and long been confined in gaol that they had never before in their lives—no, not even during their imprisonment in Siberia—heard such terrible cries as those children uttered when they realised that they were going to be taken to the Che-Ka's cellars again. Indeed, my informants said, they had never before felt such burning hatred of their oppressors as when their tear-dimmed vision beheld those young creatures' suffering, and saw their young forms being marched away to the yard in a frenzy of weeping.

And only recently I heard that at Irkutsk an old revolutionary named Kulikovsky had been done to death during examination by an agent of the O.G.P.U. And I have since read in the journal Dni the details of the occurrence: how that when Kulikovsky refused to

reply to his torturer's questions the latter battered him with a revolver-butt until, with skull fractured, the old man fell and died.

The Amount of Licence accorded to Executioners

I have said that Saenko was a sadist, and described some of his doings. And from writings by the Socialist Karelin we obtain also items concerning Saenko's chief assistant, the sailor Edward, a fellow who would fall to friendly talk and jest with a group of prisoners, and then suddenly draw his revolver and shoot one of the wretches through the back of the neck.

And from a writer named Averbuch, a man well acquainted with affairs in Odessa, we hear of the abominable doings of Kalinchenko, the head of the Che-Ka of that city. To his fantastic whims and crazy dispensation of " justice " many stories are due. For example, once he celebrated his nameday by sending to the local prison for " three of the fattest bourgeois to be obtained," and, in his drunken frenzy, shooting them then and there. And Averbuch also has written:

> Once when I called at the Cafe Astra (a place frequented almost exclusively by Bolshevist officials) I heard from Vaska the executioner's own lips the story of his shooting of two bourgeois. Yes, he described to me their agonies of mind before death, their kissings of his hands and feet, their beggings for mercy. And he added: " After all, I have only done my duty as a revolutionary."

At Odessa, too, there was an executioner named Johnson, a man sent thither from Moscow. And of him Averbuch has written [1]:

> Before long the fellow's name became a synonym for everything that was cruel and vile. For only he, only this

[1] In The Che-Ka of Odessa, published at Kishinev in 1920, p. 80.

Johnson, only this negro executioner, could skin a victim before killing him, or cut off a prisoner's limbs, one by one, during the ordeal of examination.

Yet was Johnson the only ruffian who could do such things? At a Bolshevist exhibition held in Moscow during the years 1920-21 one of the exhibits was a pair of " gloves " which had been ripped from the human hand ; and though the Bolshevists represented this pair to be an example of atrocities committed by the Whites, rumours as to Saenko taking " gloves " from victims at Kharkov had reached Moscow much earlier than that, and " gloves " of the sort had actually been found in the basement of the Che-Ka's premises, whilst Anarchists subsequently brought from Kharkov to the Butyrka had unanimously testified to perpetrations of the abomination in question. Yet Lounacharsky, a member of the Party thus exhibiting Saenko's " gloves " as a sample of cruelty committed by the opposite side,[1] had said at a session of the Soviet held on December 4, 1918 : " Although we are accused of a Hottentot standard of morality, we are not going to admit the impeachment " ! With Johnson was associated a young woman executioner named Vera Grebenninkova (or " Dora"). This female's talent for barbarism rivalled that of the negro himself, and amongst other stories of her ferocity we may include the item that she would tear out victims' hair by the handful before doing the same with them limb by limb—cutting off ears, dislocating jaws, and the like. Her activities may be summed up in the fact that during her two and a half months with the Odessan Che-Ka she shot over 700 persons—a third of the whole tale ! [2]

[1] The pair of " gloves " in question are still to be seen in the Great Palace of the Kremlin. They figure in Edouard Herriot's book, La Russie Nouvelle.

[2] See Averbuch's The Che-Ka of Odessa, p. 86.

In Kiev it was the practice to make the condemned prostrate themselves amongst the curdled blood on the floor before being shot through the back of the head, or brained. And in certain cases they were even made to prostrate themselves upon victims shot a moment or two earlier, or were taken out into the garden for the purpose of a " human hunt " of the kind related by the Kievan Sisters of Mercy. " Mikhailov, the spruce, immaculate chief of the Che-Ka, had a particular love for stripping prisoners naked, and then chivying them about the Che-Ka garden with a brandished revolver." [1]

There is a similar reminiscence recorded by the French authoress, Odette Kun, a self-styled Communist whom untoward circumstances caused to be confined in Che-Ka cells at Sebastopol, Simferopol, Kharkov, and Moscow. In one passage this writer describes a Petrograd hunt of women prisoners which she had had related to her by an actual eye-witness of the " sport." [2] It seems that in 1920 her informant had, with twenty other women, been incarcerated for " counter-revolutionary activity."

One night a band of soldiers arrived at the building, and drove some of my companions out into the yard ; and the next moment, when a chorus of almost inhuman cries reached our ears, and we looked through a window into the courtyard, we saw that the women had been stripped of every shred of clothing, and were being bundled into a wagon. Later, we learnt that they were taken out into the country, and told to run for their lives, with a promise that the first who reached a given goal should have her life spared. Needless to say, all of them were killed.

S. N. Volkonsky's memoirs, again, state that in

[1] Archives of the Russian Revolution, Vol. VI.

[2] See Odette Kun's Sous Lenine, Notes d'une Femme Deportee en Russie par les Anglais, p. 179, and also No. 3 of the review Na Chouzhoi Storonye. Odette Kun had begun by being deported from Constantinople by the British authorities, who suspected her of carrying on Communist propaganda.

Briansk it was the practice to shoot prisoners in the back as soon as ever an examination was concluded [1] ; also, that in Siberia prisoners were brained with an iron " rattle." And a woman has related :

Just under our window I saw an ex-agent of the Okhrana (the old secret political police force) being killed in the Che-Ka's courtyard. He was killed with a pole or a rifle-butt. It took over an hour to finish him off, and all the time he was beseeching the men for mercy.

At Ekaterinoslav, too, a fellow called Valiavko who shot "counter-revolutionaries " by the hundred would release from ten to fifteen prisoners in a small garden around which he had had a special fence constructed, and then enter with two or three friends, and fall to shooting at the " game." [2] In the same city " Comrade " Trepelov, head of the Che-Ka, would select victims for execution merely by the process of marking names on the lists whose appearance displeased him, and so, with a " Raz." [3] in thick red pencil, sign the victims' death-warrant. Another device of his was to pencil the lists in such a manner as to render exact determination of which names were meant impossible. Also, when the local prison was being evacuated he saved time by having the whole of his listfuls of persons (fifty in all) shot indiscriminately.

In the Revolutsionnoye Dielo (" The Revolutionary Cause ") [4] of Petrograd we find the following details of how sixty persons were shot after the Tagantsev trial:

The shootings took place at a station on the Irinovskaya Railway, where the prisoners were led out at dawn, and told to dig their own graves. Then, when the graves were half

[1] See this author's My Memoirs, p. 263.
[2] See Z. U. Arbatov, in Archives of the Russian Revolution, XII, 89.
[3] Short for the slang expression " Raskhod," equivalent to " to be killed," or " dispatched."
[4] Of March, 1922.

dug, they were told to remove their clothing. . . . From all sides came groans and cries for mercy, but the victims nevertheless were pushed into the holes, and fired upon—one lot being pushed upon the top of the previous lot, and shot even as the latter had been shot, until all the graves had become filled up with dead and groaning.

The executioners of Moscow did their daily work in dungeons fitted with asphalt floors and gutters and trap-falls to carry off the blood. We find a good description of the ruffians in an article entitled " The Ship of Death," and included in the collection The Che-Ka. The three executioners most prominent in Moscow were men named Emelianov, Pankratov, and Zhoukov—all of them registered members of the Communist Party, and therefore persons accustomed to live on the fat of the land. Like all other executioners, too, they were paid by piece rate, and received their victims' clothes and jewellery for their perquisites. Hence many of them amassed perfect fortunes from gold-mounted teeth torn out, and pectoral crosses filched.

An eye-witness has stated in the journal Echo of Kovno that at one time shootings in the cellars of Nos. 13 and 14 Bretenka Street, Moscow, were carried out by so poising a rifle on a stand at the nearer end of the basement as to point towards the precise place where the head of a victim would naturally come, and that if the victim was too short to reach the place, steps were placed beneath his feet.[1]

Again, S. S. Maslov speaks of a woman executioner whom he frequently saw during the year 1919. Every two or three days this woman would make her appearance in the central prison hospital with a cigarette between her teeth, a whip in her hand, and an unsheathed revolver at her waist. And as she traversed the wards

[1] In the same connection see the Posledniya Novosty of July 17, 1921.

whence the next batch of victims was about to be removed for execution, she would revile and flog like dogs any patients who were so benumbed with terror as to be slow in collecting their belongings, or who sobbed too audibly as they bade their comrades farewell. Quite a young woman she was—not more than twenty or so. Nor was she the only female executioner in Moscow.

And from the same Maslov, who, as ex-member of the Constituent Assembly for Vologda Province, was well acquainted with events in that region, we have a description of a non-professional female executioner named Rebekah Plastinina-Maisel who was a surgeon's assistant in a small town in Tver Province, shot, single-handed, over 100 victims. Of this harpy and her second husband, the notorious Kedrov, a woman named E. D. Kouskova who then was living as an exile at Vologda has stated that the pair would question prisoners from their travelling saloon at railway stations, and then and there shoot the wretches as soon as Rebekah had finished belabouring them, and shouting at them, and attacking them with her fists as ever and anon she cried hysterically "To be shot! Put them up against the wall! " And, adds Maslov, " I myself know of at least ten cases in which women executioners amused themselves for a while with ' potting ' holes in their victims' heads." And from a correspondent of the journal Golos Rossii (" The Voice of Russia")[1] we have a description of similar activities in Archangel during the spring and summer of 1920, with, for " heroine " again, the same Rebekah Plastinina-Maisel.[2]

In Archangel (says the correspondent), after the mock funeral procession of empty red coffins, Rebekah fell to wreaking vengeance upon her old party foes. Indeed, she

[1] Of March 25, 1922.

[2] This was before she became Kedrov's wife.

became a maniac upon whose head there must have fallen the curses of hundreds of mothers and wives, for her malice surpassed even the malice of her male colleagues on the All-Russian Che-Ka. To begin with, she repaid petty-insults once shown her by her first husband's family by having that family crucified en masse. ... So cruel, mad, and hysterical she was that also she invented a story that once some White officers had tied her to a horse's tail, and started off the animal at a gallop. And she came to believe this self-imagined legend so firmly that, as soon as she reached Solovetsky, she took over from her husband the post of director of atrocities in that establishment, whilst later she had the victims whom Eydouk's commission had arrested and dispatched to Moscow returned thence, forwarded by steamer to Kholmogory (that graveyard of the flower of Russia's youth !), stripped, loaded on to barges, shot, and thrown into the sea. To the end of the summer the town groaned under the burden of her terrorism.

And in another communication to the same journal the correspondent adds: "In Archangel alone this Rebekah Plastinina-Maisel killed eighty-seven officers and thirty-three citizens with her own hand. And on another occasion she with her own hand scuttled a barge laden with 500 refugees and Miller soldiers." [1] Take also the following thumbnail sketch by an eyewitness who was present at the shooting of fifty-two persons in a single evening :

The chief executioner, a Lettish woman with a face so brutalised as to have earned for her, amongst the prisoners, the sobriquet of "The Pug," was a female sadist. Always she wore breeches ; and always she carried two revolvers at her belt. But subsequently this same " Comrade Louba " (she hailed, I believe, from Baku) was herself shot for stealing Government property.[2]

Another such woman was the female chief of the Che-Ka of Ounech, who, a brute beast rather than a human

[1] See the Golos Rossii of January 27, 1922.
[2] See the Posledniya Novosty of March 2, 1921.

being, and a fit match for the Lettish hag, never stirred a step without revolvers and a goodly stock of cartridges in her leathern waist-belt. Once a refugee just come from Russia said of her to me : " The. inhabitants of Ounech speak of her literally with bated breath." May history preserve her name for the benefit of future generations !

And the town of Rybinsk too had its beast-woman, a creature named Zina. And Ekaterinoslav, Sebastopol and other places similarly evolved female monstrosities.[1]

For the rest, human nerves are fallible, and even Bolshevist executioners can weary of " a task for the people's benefit." Hence, in many cases it was by ruffians sunken in intoxication, in the requisite condition of " irresponsibility" for slaughtering their fellows, that massacres were carried out. Frequently I myself, whilst in the Butyrka Gaol, could see that its most hardened administrative officials, from the Commandant downwards, had indulged in cocaine or some other drug before the functionary whom we called the " Commissary of Death " was due to call at the gaol for his victims, and they would have to be collected from the cells by the officials. " In almost every cupboard," says Nilostousky concerning the Che-Kas in Kiev, " and, for that matter, in almost every drawer, we found empty cocaine bottles in piles." Thus drugged, of course, executioners would lose the last semblance of humanity, and a trustworthy witness has given us a particularly good instance of this, as related to that witness by a high official of the All-Russian Che-Ka [2]:

Once (the informant said), the chief executioner of Moscow, a man named Maga, a fellow who had shot thousands with

[1] Der Blutrausch des Bolschewismus, p. 19.

[2] See the section " A Year in the Butyrka " in The Che-Ka, p. 146

his own hand (and the informant gave the almost fantastic estimate of 11,000 !), completed the shooting of fifteen or twenty victims by throwing himself also upon the director of the special branch, Popov, who had attended the batch of executions merely for the pleasure of the spectacle. Maga's eyes were bloodshot, and his frame bespattered with blood and brains. Indeed, he looked mad and horrible. Fortunately, though Popov lost his head, and ran for his life, and a scuffle followed, some other Che-Ka officials came to the rescue, and overpowered Maga.

Yet even drugging did not always enable executioners' minds to stand the strain. In the report of the Kievan Sisters of Mercy to which I have more than once referred we read that sometimes Avdokhin, head of the principal Kievan Che-Ka, so felt the nerve-tension that actually he would go and pour out his troubles to the Sisters ! "I am ill, Sisters," he would say. " My head is burning, and I cannot sleep. All night the dead men keep torturing me." And says another of the Sisters :

Never can I think of the faces of Terekhov, and Nikiforov, and Ougarov, and Abnaver, and Gousig and other members of those Che-Kas without feeling more than ever convinced that they are abnormal, sadists, cocaine fiends, men who have lost the last semblance of humanity.

At all events, it stands beyond doubt that for a while the lunatic asylums of Russia registered large numbers of cases of a disease which became known as " executioner's dementia," owing to its tendency to render its subjects a prey to real or imaginary remorse for bloodshed done, and to the most harrowing hallucinations. Similarly, eye-witnesses have told of Bolshevist sailors suddenly being seized with paroxysms in public places, and a Muscovite correspondent of the Dni once wrote: " The State Political Department has been trying to dispose of these madmen by shooting

them—a resource which alone has enabled more than one such sufferer to find release from his terrible, haunting nightmares."

Also, there were executioners evincing the clearest possible symptoms of mental degeneracy. Well do I remember a boy executioner who, aged only fourteen, shared my imprisonment in the Butyrka. So intellectually deficient was this lad, and so insensible of the enormity of what he had done, that he would boast of his exploits to his fellow prisoners, and relate them in the fullest detail. And when, during the January of 1922, a female " people's prosecutor " of one of the Che-Kas of Kiev (Remover, a Hungarian), was arrested on a charge of having, without authority, shot a batch of eighty prisoners, most of whom were young men, she was found to be sexually deranged, and to have shot not only persons' actually suspected, but also witnesses who unfortunately had excited her diseased craving during the time that they had been testifying before the Che-Ka. Lastly, a medical man has described for us a woman commissary named Nesterenko who would compel Red Guards to violate helpless women and girls—yes, and young children—in her very presence.[1]

Again, one needs but scan the records of the Denikin Commission to see that in dozens of cases higher officials, functionaries who in no way stood charged with the actual performance of executions, killed victims with their own hands. An example is Vichmann of Odessa, who had six executioners at his disposal (one of them, by the way, officiated under the pseudonym of " Amour" !) yet would go into the cells, and slaughter prisoners for his personal pleasure. And Atarbekov of Piatigorsk is known to have

[1] See the Novoyi Russkoye Slovo (" The New Russian Word ") of New York, of February 19, 1924.

stabbed victims with a dagger, and Novar of Odessa to have killed a man named Grigoriev and his twelve-year-old son before witnesses, and another Che-Ka official to have had a weakness for " making his victim kneel down in front of him, and compressing the unfortunate man's head between his knees, and shooting him through the back of the neck." [1] Such instances, in fact, are endless.

Also, so common, in Russia, did death become that, as previously mentioned, a special phraseology of cynicism crept into the official press when detailing lists of shootings : examples being seen when victims were said to have been " paid over," or to have been " given a change," or to have been " sent to meet their father," or to have been " dispatched to Doukhonin's headquarters," and when Voul of Moscow adopted the practice of writing that he had " played the guitar upon " them, or " sealed " them, and when Piatigorsk journalists took to speaking of " giving " victims " the natsokal" (an onomatopoeic word based upon the sound of a revolver trigger snapping), and of " sending " them " to the Mashouk to sniff violets." Lastly, once the Commandant of the Che-Ka of Petrograd himself was heard shouting to his wife over the telephone: " To-day I am to take some woodcocks over to Kronstadt." [2]

An equal amount of brutality and cynicism marked the actual carrying out of the executions. In Odessa, when the death sentence had been pronounced upon an accused, the executioners stripped him naked, hung a numbered tab about his neck for identification purposes whenever the moment for slaughter should

[1] See the Dni of March 7, 1924.

[2] Other instances of this kind of phraseology are given by Kart-zevsky in his The Speech of Warfare and Revolution, Russ. Univ. Edition, Berlin, 1923.

arrive, and forced him to sign a paper acknowledging that he had himself heard his doom proclaimed. It was in Odessa, too, that the cells of the condemned would be visited by officials who mockingly charged the condemned to supply biographical details for their own obituary notices ! And a similar instance of mocking condemned prisoners is described by Madame Vyroubova—a party of sailors under an ex-lawyer named Levitsky, in this case, driving round and round a prison with songs, accordion music, and shouts of " Hi, you bourgeois ! We are chanting your requiem ! " [1]

But Petrograd, rather, went in for scrupulous observance of "legality" in the carrying out of executions. It even set aside a room specially for the purpose of informing prisoners of their fate: with the result that the room came to be known as " The Chamber of Departures." True, the Pravda once took it upon itself to ridicule an English press assertion that military bands were wont to play during the progress of executions ; yet this is no more than what actually happened on an occasion during the Terror of September, 1918, when Moscow shot some ex-Tsarist Ministers and others. In passing, it should be said that at that period all Muscovite executions were carried out by Red Guards on the Khodynka Plain, but later some Chinese replaced those Guards, and later, again, a special corps of paid executioners, assisted by, when necessary, amateurs. Again, witnesses examined by the Denikin Commission testified that both in Nikolaev and in Saratov ordinary criminals were set to execute their political fellows, and conceded their own lives as a reward, whilst in far Turkhestan judges themselves would act as executioners, and the custom seems

[1] See Archives of the Revolution, VIII, 153.

still to obtain. Of course, it is a debatable question whether the person who has passed a death sentence ought not also to carry out that sentence; but however that may be, there lies at our disposal a statement that as late as in 1923 a Judge V— always killed his own condemned, and as soon as he had sentenced them caused them to be divested of their clothing in an adjoining room, and shot. And of the Che-Ka of Odessa it is said that in 1923 it devised, for execution purposes, a dark, narrow passage-way which had a gaping cavity in the flooring at its further end, and an embrasure in each of the flanking walls, so that as the condemned man walked unawares along the passage way he fell into the pit, and could be fired upon from the embrasures without the executioners having even seen his face.

For only one more description of the kind need I make room—a description published in the fourth issue of the suppressed Left Social Revolutionary Bulletin,[1] and telling of shootings perpetrated by the Muscovite Che-Ka at the period when the " rights " of provincial Che-Kas and revolutionary tribunals were under discussion. But, as a description, it is the more valuable in that it was obtained from an actual onlooker at what was done.

Nearly every night a certain number of prisoners are removed from the cells for " dispatch to Irkutsk," as our modern oprichniki now express it. Formerly the condemned were taken out to the Khodynsky Plain for execution, but since then their destination has become, in the first instance, Number 11, Varsonofievsky Pereonlok, and then Number 7, where, in batches of thirty, or twelve, or eight, or four, as the case may be, they are led to a room on the fourth floor to be stripped to their shirts, and then marched downstairs again and, half-naked as they are, stationed against

[1] In that journal's issue for April 1919.

stacks of fuel at the end of a snow-covered yard, and shot through the back of the head. And if any shot does not prove fatal, and a victim falls with life still left in him, he receives a whole volley, or else some of the executioners run and jump upon his chest, and stamp upon it, and rain blows upon his head. It was thus that on the night of March 10-11 a Madame Olekhovskaya was shot for an offence for which a sentence even of a day's imprisonment would have been absurd. And it proved so difficult to dispatch her that, even when her head and bosom had been struck with seven bullets, her body still was quivering: whereupon Koudravtsev, an ex-Tsarist officer employee of the Che-Ka (and therefore a man fired with all the zeal of the Communist convert), ran and seized the woman by the throat, tore from her her blouse, and twisted and kneaded the vertebrae of her neck until life had fled. Her age was nineteen only. . . . Recently, seeing that the snow in that courtyard had become red and brown with the blood with which everything else in the yard is bespattered, the Che-Ka decided that the snow had better be melted away ; and as there was plenty of fuel ready, large bonfires were lighted not only in the yard but also in the street outside it. Unfortunately, as the snow dissolved, it did so in a blood-red, curdled stream, and ran out of the yard and formed pools in the street, and had to have improvised, for the removal of its damning traces, a trapfall. Yes, mingled with that dark, accusing, terrible stuff there was blood come from the hearts of people recently as alive as the executioners themselves !

Arrogantly the Bolshevists proclaim that " we have no guillotine." Ah, I know better. I know that, to an accompaniment of motor engines kept running to drown the sound of the shots, executions still are taking place in secret dungeons and basements.

And it was not only by night that shootings took place. There was a small square in front of an Archangel factory, where they took place by daylight, "where crowds of children from the neighbourhood

could collect to witness them."[1] And similarly in Odessa were people executed by daylight. And the same in Mogilev, and before the very eyes of their relatives.

Every evening between five and seven o'clock a motor-lorry would halt before the premises of the revolutionary tribunal of the Sixteenth Army ; and when there had sprung into it a dozen executioners provided with a perfect armament of weapons and a couple of spades, the persons about to die also would be loaded into the vehicle, and it would be driven away. And when, an hour later, the lorry returned, the executioners would drag thence sackfuls of boots and clothing which the deceased had recently been wearing. And all this was done exclusively in the day time (the clocks were advanced three hours for the purpose), and in the presence of the victim's relatives and friends—men, women, and children.[2]

But the conditions under which the late Tsar and his family were murdered at Ekaterinburg constitute the episode which is bound to transcend any other such episode in striking disgust to the heart of any person not either dead to human sentiment or drunken with political fanaticism : the episode of the night when a Tsar, a Tsarina, and their children were taken into a cellar, and killed before each other's eyes. Subsequently a Red Guard named Medviedev, a witness of the executions, stated to the Commission of Enquiry that was held during the February of 1919 that the victims made their preparations slowly, as though they guessed what was in store for them. All history contains no parallel to the murders wrought at Ekaterinburg during the night of July 16-17, 1918.[3]

[1] From the Posledinya Novosty of September 21, 1020.
[2] From the same, No. 168.
[3] Medviedev's and others' evidence before the Commission has been published by Telburg in America, and in No. 5 of the journal The Contemporary Historian in Germany.

The Condemned

We know that in a past age persons ascended the scaffold singing the Marseillaise. Similarly, when, in Odessa, the Left Social Revolutionaries sentenced to execution had been lashed together in pairs and loaded on to a lorry, they sang their Marseillaise, even when the weight of thirty-five corpses had been heaped upon them. But, above all, it was within the prison gates of Russia that death came to seem an everyday incident. In The Che-Ka we find described the emotions of a prisoner when first he found himself in a condemned cell.

A strong posse of Red Guards brought us to this horrible dungeon at seven o'clock in the evening : yet hardly had we realised our surroundings before the bolts of the iron door rattled, and the door itself creaked upon its hinges, and the commandant entered with a bevy of warders. " How many ? " he inquired. " Sixty-seven." "Sixty-seven, when a grave has been dug for ninety ? " And the commandant seemed puzzled, but, still more, supine and ennuye. And we ? We just sat benumbed. Already death seemed to be breathing upon us. We sat like men paralysed. " Of course, though! " cried the commandant presently, " I had forgotten that there are thirty prisoners to come from the special branch." . . . And so there began horrible, infinitely long hours of waiting for death. By some miracle a priest imprisoned with us had contrived to retain his pectoral cross; and now he produced this, fell upon his knees, and began to pray. Yes, and a Communist prisoner followed his example. Yet all the while that sobs could be heard within there were making themselves heard, without, the sounds of a hackneyed waltz on a cracked piano, and of gay folk-songs. Ah, how those songs tore at our hearts ! The sounds were coming from what had been the prison chapel, where some young Communists were holding a musical practice ! Thus closely had the irony of fate caused life and death to stand intertwined ! [1]

[1] See The Che-Ka, pp. 232, 233.

Waiting at death's door to the sounds of a cracked piano !—It is to Nilostonsky's book that we owe this description of a condemned cell, whilst also we know that in many such cells and cellars permanent darkness reigned, and that from fifteen to twenty persons would be confined in a place 4 arshini (9 1/2 feet) long by 2 arshini wide, and that amongst those people there would be both women and old men, and that, as none of them were allowed ever to leave the cell, natural functions had to be performed on the spot. And in Petrograd condemned prisoners were kept like this for as long as thirty-six hours after sentence of death had been pronounced, with neither food nor water conceded them, nor permission to leave the cell for a single moment.

And think of the mental torture endured by anyone who, like myself, has had to watch victims preparing to be shot. In particular I remember an evening in the July of 1920 when I was lying in the Butyrka prison. That evening, as a " privileged " captive, I was sitting alone in the prison yard when the following experience befell me, an experience which still leaves me doubtful as to whether I was most horrified or most awed, but not at all doubtful as to the fact that the unnatural contrast which the experience presented stabbed my senses like the point of a needle. It happened that from the portion of the prison building reserved exclusively for Communist inmates there was issuing a boisterous revel of piano music and gipsy songs and a telling of tales, for there was in progress one of the entertainments, with special artists engaged, which the administration periodically arranged for the amusement of the "privileged offenders." But suddenly, as the sounds of song and piano were echoing over the prison yard, and I was listening to them in silence, I happened to glance towards the window of the "Chamber of Souls," and saw behind the bars a face—a face convulsed with agony, a face pressed hungrily forward to inhale the free air. And I recognised it as the face of a victim who was to be shot that night, and remembered

that several other such victims, over twenty of them, were awaiting their turn to die. . . . Later that night all were fetched away by the "Commissary of Death." . . . What happened after the vision I scarcely remember, but I know that never afterwards did I feel inclined to enter the prison yard save when other prisoners were present. Often since then have I thought of the lines from Korolenko's An Incident of the Past—lines supposed to have been written by a prisoner when a death sentence was about to be carried out within the prison's walls. "... The place is silent with a silence that is the silence of death, and therefore a silence which, for all our usedness to the valuelessness of life in Russia, none would willingly break. . . ."

Next let me quote a description of a certain incident in Mogilev. My source for it is a correspondent of the Posledniya Novosty.[1]

On the eve of the session of the Gomel circuit court we saw it announced on the street comers that the court was going publicly to try some deserters from the Red Army ; and later, when the trial opened in the local theatre, I attended it. There I saw the three men who were supposed to be sitting in judgment upon the accused (of whom there were about a hundred) do no more than shout at them for a while, and then sentence them to death. ... As I passed out of the building through the foyer I saw people calmly buying tickets for the theatrical performance of the coming evening !

And the condemned in general ? Well, most of them went to the slaughter silently, and without protest or resistance, after submitting to be pinioned with barbed wire.

If (wrote Sister Medviedeva in the Kievan report)[2] you could see ourcondemned being taken to execution, you would see that they are practically dead already. But the few who either resist or make abject, useless petition to the executioners are beaten and kicked before being dragged down to the basement where slaughter awaits them.

[1] No. 168 of that journal.

[2] Published in the Rousskaya Lietopis (" The Russian Chronicle "), No. 5, pp. 199 and 200.

And take another reminiscence of Kiev, as related by Madame Kourakina :

We stood horror-stricken, and our very hearts seemed to stop, when night fell, and some men arrived to fetch away the condemned. The room lay hushed in a silence as of the grave. Yet the unfortunates knew how to die : they went to their doom without a sound, with truly amazing calmness. Only the pallor of their faces and the abstraction of their gaze showed that already they had ceased to belong to this present existence. Yet a few poor creatures did rebel against the thought of death : and it was these who produced upon me the most harrowing impression of all as horribly, to the last moment, they struggled against the guards' violence, and clutched at bunks and corners and doors, and wept and shrieked in the frenzy of their terror. Yet the guards only laughed at them, saying : " So you don't want to be put to the wall, eh ? Yet to the wall you must go."

Apparently, those of the condemned who committed suicide before execution did so less through fear of death itself than through fear of death through official slaughter. For example, I remember a Tartar in the Butyrka who went to immense pains to cut his throat with a fragment of glass rather than be executed. And suicides included many cases of self-incineration, as mentioned both in The Che-Ka and in the materials amassed by the Denikin Commission. But always the executioners tried to restore the suicides to life. And why so ? Because always they wished to put an end to the unfortunates with their own hands—it was against the Communists' rule to let a single victim, when sentenced, escape "revolutionary justice." There are many staggering instances of such insistence upon fulfilment of " justice" included in the data compiled by the Denikin Commission, and I will cite one of them. Once when some bodies of persons who had been executed were being driven to the Odessa

mortuary, the driver noticed a woman victim's eyelids flutter, and pointed the fact out to the mortuary attendant. And, sure enough, the woman had no sooner been carried into the mortuary than she regained her senses sufficiently to cry out (though still half-dazed, and for the reason, as a witness has asserted, that she had caught sight of her dead husband near her) : "I am cold ! " and " Where is my cross ? " And though the attendant besought her to be quiet, she persisted until some executioners heard her, and came and gave her the coup-de-grace. And by another deponent it has been related that when a man was already in his coffin he regained; consciousness, and promptly was finished off. And there is on record a case where, on the lid of a coffin slowly opening and emitting a cry of " My comrades, I am still alive ! " a telephone message was sent to the Che-Ka, and elicited the reply, " Settle him with a brick," whilst a further appeal to the head of the Che-Ka himself (Vichmann) called forth the jest: " We are to requisition the best surgeon in Odessa, I suppose ? " and finally a Che-Ka employee had to be dispatched to the scene, to shoot the victim a second time with a revolver.

As regards relatives seeking information concerning the fate of imprisoned kinsfolk, I myself know how often the Che-Ka of Moscow got rid of such inquirers by giving them permits to see captives whom the Che-Ka knew already to be lying in the Lefortovsky Mortuary. And even women and children attending with parcels for prisoners would be met with the answer : " No person of that name is confined in this prison," or with the enigmatical statement that " that person has been removed to another place in the city."

Finally, in S. M. Oustinov's reminiscences we came upon the following horrible, yet apposite, picture:

" In the main street a barefooted, bedraggled woman was whirling madly to and fro before the advancing troops. The previous night, before leaving the town the Bolshevists had shot her husband."

Bolshevist Treatment of Women

As one reads accounts of Bolshevist outrages upon women one scarcely wonders that these outrages should have provoked a desire for revenge. Take the following description of sufferings endured by women in the concentration camp at Kholmogory:

The authorities' recruiting of their cooks and laundresses and other serving-women is done exclusively from the ranks of the female prisoners. And for the most part they select gently nurtured women. Also, the staff (especially a man called Okren) compel such girl prisoners as take their fancy to come and visit them by night, on the plea that there is domestic work requiring to be done, but, in reality, to use these girls as their mistresses. And the terrified victims cannot refuse, but must bear such insults in silence. Once a woman prisoner did voice her disgust (this was during the days when Bakhoulis was in command) but was shot on the spot; and when, on another occasion, an ex-girl student was sent for by the assistant commandant at one o'clock in the morning, and at first refused to answer the summons, her comrades actually besought her to go, lest all of them should be made to suffer for her refusal. In the same way, whenever women prisoners were taken to the bathhouse, they would find Red Guards in wait for them, both there and in the retiring-rooms.[1]

Like things obtained under the special branch of the Kuban region. And outstanding cases elsewhere are those of an ex-school teacher, a Madame Dombrovskaya, who was raped before being shot, and of a young woman who, sentenced to death by the Che-Ka of

[1] From The Che-Ka.

Kislovodsk for "speculative trading," was subsequently violated by the head of the " counter-espionage department " before being killed with his sword, and having foul sport made of her naked, dismembered body.

Akin is a witness's statement that, before the wife and daughter of General Ch---- were executed near Chernigov, the daughter, aged twenty, was raped : the facts being related to the witness by the chauffeurs who drove the party to the scene of execution. And another statement says :

Some women were writhing hysterically on the floor amongst a group of executioners as, with drunken laughter and lewd, filthy jests, they kept tearing open the women's clothing on the pretext of "searches." All of a sudden the senior warder (one of the regular prison staff, not a regular Che-Ka employee) cried in a voice tremulous as with apprehension : " Don't touch the women ! Such fellows as you are not to be trusted with women when they are going to be shot."

Such, if you please, a description of an ordinary execution night (the date was November 17, 1919), at Saratov ! Revolutsionnaya Rossia [1] also gives details of rapings. And only recently a woman exile wrote to the Berlin-published journal Anarkhichesky Vestnik[2] an account of her experiences in the Vologda transport prison :

Before the wardress left us she warned us to be on our guard, since infallibly, when night fell, either the superintendent or the director would enter " with the usual intentions." The procedure, she said, was so stereotyped that very few women passed through the prison without something of the sort being done to them, whilst, owing, to most of the officials being syphilitic, the women so treated in most cases caught the disease. . . . We found that we had not received the warning for nothing.

[1] In the tenth issue of that journal.

[2] Nos. 3 and 4.

I myself can remember a woman prisoner being violated in the top storey of the men's solitary confinement building in Moscow (the then prison of the Muscovite Special Branch, an institution notorious for the severity of its regime) and the Red Guard concerned in the affair excusing himself on the ground that the woman had given herself to him for half a pound of bread. And this is not impossible. For half a pound of foul, black, prison bread! Yes. What further comment is necessary ?

Before the Lausanne Tribunal the witness Sinovary told of a multitude of Petrograd rapings. And the following extract enables us to read of what was done in that way by the Che-Ka of the Kuban region :

Over that Cossack village Saraev held such unlimited sway as to possess power of life and death over every inhabitant, and be able to carry out what confiscations and requisitions and shootings he liked. Yet, though exhausted with sensual pleasures already, he still desired to gratify his animal instincts, and never let a pretty woman come under his notice without outraging her. His method of procedure was equally simple, primitive, lawless, and cruel. As soon as he coveted a female victim he would begin by arresting her nearest male relative—brother, husband, father, or what not, or all of them together—and sentencing them to death. And, upon that, petitions would be presented, and intercession made, by influential inhabitants and Saraev would avail himself of the fact to confront the woman with the ultimatum that, unless she became his mistress, her relatives would become lost to her. Whereupon, forced to choose between the two evils, the woman, naturally, selected, in most cases, the alternative of degradation; whilst, for his part, Saraev would, so long as she continued in that degradation, hold up the accused man's trial. And the terror-stricken population dared not make the slightest protest, but had to remain deprived of the elementary right of every population, the right of defending its own interests.

In another Cossack village a Madame Pashkovskaya,

the wife of a Cossack officer, found favour in the eyes of the head of the local executive committee, and upon that there began a persecution of her husband, and the head of the committee even went so far as to requisition a portion of the husband's house for his own residence. Lastly, since the object of his attentions failed to be affected even by the factor of propinquity, the head of the committee removed the husband, the obstacle, by having him imprisoned as "an ex-officer and counter-revolutionary," and, finally, shot.

Again, once a Che-Ka inquisitor said to a prisoner of his, a Madame G-------: " You are very pretty, and your husband is unworthy of you." Then, as though it had been an afterthought, he added: "I have a great mind to release you, and to shoot your husband as a counter-revolutionary. But no—I will release both him and you if you will become my mistress as soon as ever I have set you free." And though, almost beside herself with agitation, Madame G------- consulted a fellow prisoner on the point, and was advised to save her husband at all costs, and allowed the inquisitor to begin visiting her, her husband was shot as though no agreement at all had been made !

Again, a Madame M--------, an ex-officer's wife, was imprisoned by a special branch, and told by the inquisitor concerned that, provided she became his mistress, she should be released ; whereupon she agreed, and was released, and the inquisitor took up his abode in her house. Yet later she confessed to a friend:

> I detest the man, but what can I do against him with my husband away, and no one else in the house but my three small children ? All that I can say for myself is that at least I feel secure in so far as that I no longer have reason to fear inquisitional searches, or to live in daily dread of

having my house entered, and myself dragged before the Che-Ka again.

And a witness whom I have already quoted in connection with events in the Crimea told the Lausanne Tribunal that each of the sailors active in that region possessed four or five mistresses, and that in most cases the poor women were wives of massacred or escaped officers, since rejection of the sailors' overtures meant execution, and only a few stronger-minded ladies were able to muster up sufficient courage to solve the problem by suicide.

Intoxicated with blood, the sailors ran amok, seized the execution lists, and, in haphazard fashion, put crosses against any name which offended them by its appearance. And into their midnight orgies they impressed even Sisters of Mercy, the wives of imprisoned or escaped officers, and women hostages. And before the night was over all against whose names they had put crosses had been shot."

Again, a witness testified before the Denikin Commission that licentious orgies had been carried out systematically by the Che-Ka and tribunal of Nikolaev, and included even women who had come to beg for relatives' release, with that inclusion as the price of their relatives' freedom. And from Sister Medviedeva the same Commission heard a Kievan incident of still greater shamelessness:

Not an employee of the Che-Ka lacked a certain number of women. In fact, such fellows could cast the eye of lust upon every woman, and the state of things was absolutely disgusting. Sorin, in particular, loved lustful orgies, and on Easter Eve the large hall which used to belong to Deme-chenko witnessed the following. Two ladies entered the hall to present a petition on a prisoner's behalf; and just as they did so, some curtains were drawn aside, and disclosed three nude women playing upon a piano ; and it was in these women's presence that the ladies had to proffer Sorin their petition. They themselves told me of the occurrence later.

Naturally, in face of such an order of life in Russia, the "fortnights for inculcating respect for women " that were advocated by the Prabochnaya Gazeta and the Proletarskaya Pravda[1] proved a foregone conclusion, and there set in a system of " communisation of women," and of " days of free love," which became an established, undeniable manifestation of the true meaning of Bolshevist tyranny, even though both Bolshevist and non-Bolshevist journals have attempted to ridicule the idea that the system ever existed as a fact. The existence of it stands corroborated by a host of documents.

" Squeezing the Bourgeoisie "

The Terror meant murder and bloodshed and capital punishment. And it meant still more, for at its disposal it had means of affecting contemporary thought and imagination that went yet deeper. And those means were as endless, and as diverse, of form as always is the case when tyranny and outrage are expressing themselves. But, above all, the Terror meant capital punishment—capital punishment everywhere, and at every step, in every nook and cranny.

Thus wrote, in The Moral Aspect of the Revolution, the Herr Steinberg who helped to bring about the October upheaval, and at first was for building a social system which he has since declared to " have for its bloody crown, for its tragic apotheosis, the death penalty," and to be " daily and persistently killing the people's soul." Well, he had better have written the words in Petrograd in 1917 than in Berlin in 1923, for since 1917 the Bolshevist tyranny has daily been setting human life at nought, and stifling free speech, and cramping the popular soul with the heavy fetters of a censorship, and slaying Russia's best writers and publicists.

[1] Respectively The Workman's Gazette and Proletarian Truth.

But I must draw the reader's attention to the incomparably clumsy and senseless form of popular terrorisa-tion which, known as "squeezing the bourgeoisie," was a resource practised upon the educated classes everywhere, but more especially in the south. The procedure was that special days would be set apart for carrying out wholesale domiciliary searches which stripped the inhabitants of the bulk of their clothing, linen, and other articles, and left them, by way of " rations," merely a shirt apiece, a couple of handkerchiefs, and so forth. Let us take a description of a particular " squeezing day " which, in 1921, was carried out in Ekaterinodar on the anniversary of the Paris Commune[1]:

At nightfall, that day, all houses inhabited by persons unlucky enough to have been " gentry " or merchants or leading citizens or lawyers or officers before the Revolution, and to be doctors or professors or engineers (in short, bourgeois) at the present time, were invaded by Red Guards and Bolshevists armed to the teeth, who made careful search everywhere, and removed all money and other valuables, dragged the houses' occupiers outside in their indoor clothes, and, without regard for age or sex, or even for state of health (so that persons suffering from typhus were taken), loaded the lot on to wagons, and dispatched them to destinations elsewhere—half of them to a local concentration camp, and the other half to Petrovsk for forced labour in the Caspian fisheries. And this atrocious deportation of families by the hundred went on for a day and a half, accompanied with confiscation of the property of the deported, and distribution of the same amongst the local workers—though, as a matter of fact, we do not know how far it really reached those workers ; we only know that at least it reached the market-place, and, in many cases, was bought back by its owners from the speculators who had since purchased it. Thus it became quite a common thing to see one's clothes figuring on commissaries and their wives and relatives, and during the first year of the Bolshevist usurpation the system

[1] This description is quoted from Nos. 12, 13, and 43 of Revolutsionnaya Rossia.

gathered to itself a secondary system of arbitrary " contributions " which in time attained almost fantastical dimensions. Yet to decline to pay those " contributions " meant arrest and imprisonment as a hostage, and then, not infrequently, death."[1]

Perhaps a speech delivered by the notorious Bolshevist leader Mouraviev at a forced meeting of bourgeois held after the Bolshevists' seizure of Odessa in 1918 will best illustrate what the term " contributions " or " mites given for the revolutionary cause " really meant. Said Mouraviev :

I have reached the hall late, and the enemy is knocking at the gates of the city already. And, perhaps you bourgeois like the sound of that ? However, do not rejoice too soon, for if I should have to surrender Odessa to the enemy, I intend to leave you neither your houses nor your lives. So look here. What you have to do is that within three days you must pay up to me ten million roubles. And if you don't, then woe betide you, for I shall drown every man of you with a stone about his neck, and deport his family.

On the same lines as the foregoing was a " day of peaceful protest" which the Bolshevists of Odessa announced for May 13, 1919, just a year after the above speech by Mouraviev. And for the purposes of the day these Bolshevists formed as many as sixty gangs charged to relieve Odessa's propertied classes of all " redundant " food and footwear and outer and under clothing and money : after which they broadcast threats that anyone who failed to observe the decreed day, as ordained by the local " council of workers' deputies," would be imprisoned, and anyone who actively opposed the decree shot. Also, the committee drew up an " Instruction " which set forth in minute detail the articles to be confiscated, but at least left to each inhabitant three shirts, three pairs of under-pants, and three pairs of

[1] See Margoulies' Years of Fire.

socks. Which last provision had the effect of inspiring Pieshekhonov, our informant, to say that the devil is not always as black as he is painted. Pieshekhonov then continues :

Unfortunately, on the arrival of the day the citizens gave way to panic, and ran hither and thither in terror and perplexity as to where they should hide their valuables. I, for my part, could only smile at the idea of thinking that anyone could rob several hundreds of thousands of persons in a single day, and so thoroughly as to include even money concealed in nooks and corners. " No ! " I said to myself. " One of two things will happen. Either the Bolshevist bands will be held up as soon as ever they enter the first houses, or a Bolshevist organised robbery will become a popular uncontrolled brigandage, and the Bolshevists at length find themselves forced to restrain the latter." And this duly happened—the Bolshevist bands being held up on their first entry into houses and—well, and the unexpected happening in the circumstance that it was precisely in the localities inhabited by the working-folk that those bands met with the most abuse. In fact, it was not long before sounds of firing began to be heard there, and in the end the Bolshevists altogether had to abandon their " day of peaceful protest" or they would have found themselves confronted with an armed rebellion not so much of the bourgeoisie as of the proletariat. True, later (in 1920), the Bolshevists of Odessa did succeed, I believe, in a " confiscation of all surpluses " ; but by that time I had left the place, and cannot say how the confiscation was effected, save by, probably, allowing a large number of persons to evade the affair altogether. And a Kharkov confiscation of surpluses during the same year came to an equally unsatisfactory conclusion, for, though on the first night, the Bolshevists took care to search strictly on the system of house by house, on the following night they were foolish enough to visit only houses previously selected—the more prosperous residences—and so to draw protests from influential inhabitants, with complaints of unauthorised robbery, which eventually compelled the searches to be stopped. As for my own experience in Kharkov, it was that the searchers never reached the house in which I was.

The chief reason for the Bolshevists' failure in Odessa [wrote Margoulies] was that they committed the gigantic tactical error of not previously exempting from search all houses belonging to the industrial workers and the petty officials. For failure to do so brought it about that, as soon as ever news of the impending "peaceful protest " reached the town, there set in a panic not so much of the bourgeoisie as of the proletariat, and a stoppage of work at most of the factories in order that the hands might hasten home and safeguard their property from the illegality that was supposed to be threatening even the goods of Communists. Whence some of the scenes were indescribable as the requisitionary detachments (mostly youths and young women of question; able character) were assailed with curses and abuse, and in some cases even with physical violence and sousings with boiling water: until, the popular passions having become thoroughly aroused, no course was left save reluctantly to relinquish the scheme before isolated cases of protest should coalesce into a popular upheaval, and, as early as one o'clock in the afternoon (that is to say, four hours only after the " peaceful protest" had been begun), to circulate an urgent message that the domiciliary visitations must cease, and, next day, to issue an address on the subject to the workers. Said the address : " We feel not a little hurt that yesterday the workers should seem to have taken the part of the bourgeoisie. As a matter of fact, it was impossible for us to charge our instructions with an order that searches should not be carried out in the working-class districts, for in that case the bourgeoisie would have resorted thither in large numbers for concealment of all the stolen wealth which they have been hoarding." But the appeal concluded : "The misunderstanding which has happened is the more regrettable in that it is bound to act as a setback to what constitutes a primary factor in the workers' cause."

A month earlier a similar demand had been made upon Odessa, but in this case for a definite " contribution " of 500,000,000 roubles. And both in Odessa and elsewhere evictions were carried out at twenty-four hours' notice, whilst in Vladikavkaz women found walking out

of doors were then and there sent to menial work in the hospitals, and in Sebastopol and other towns of the Crimea members of the bourgeoisie were seized and put to hard labour. " All members of the male sex found wearing starched collars, and all members of the female sex found wearing hats, shall be apportioned tasks of severity." Such persons were arrested just as they were, conveyed forthwith to the outskirts of the town, and set to trench-digging. And in time casual street seizure of the kind was improved upon with nocturnal house-to-house collection, and dispatch of the captured bourgeois to militia camps. There, the next morning, the men were, regardless of age, sorted into batches of ten, and set to loading railway wagons and digging trenches—tasks which such of them as had never before done manual labour found come none too easy, and admit of but slow performance, and so bring down upon the performers both the taskmaster's tongue and the taskmaster's lash. And meanwhile the womenfolk amongst the captured bourgeoisie were set to clear and scour out Red Guard barrack-rooms, commissaries' houses, and Communist establishments generally. And one Easter Sunday a party of young girls in Sebastopol were unexpectedly commandeered for menial tasks in public for the sole purpose of making a spectacle of them; after being ordered to assemble at given points, they were sent to scrub out and dust and scavenger Red Guard barrack-rooms that were, it need hardly be said, plunged in an extremity of filth. And not only had these gently nurtured girls (who were, for the most part, only of school age) to perform their tasks in ordinary (non-working) clothes, but also, being forbidden to bring with them any of the cleaning implements necessary for such work, had, at the point of commissaries' revolvers, and threatened

with the lash, to scrape out barrack lavatories with their bare fingers![1]

Kiev, too, had its " week for confiscation of surpluses." And the manner in which that " week " was carried out makes it more than ever certain that Steinberg was right when, in his book, he asserted that no system at all governed Bolshevist requisitions and confiscations, so that, as always happens in such cases, spoliation aimed at the well-fed and the leisured missed a large number of them, and hit, for the most part, the underfed and the overworked.

In Vladikavkaz an Order promulgated on April 9, 1918, said that " all members of the bourgeoisie shall assemble at the Winter Theatre at 8 P.M. to-night (no matter whether they have paid their contributions or not) and be shot in case of failure to comply with this Order." Also, it might be well to quote the following conversation between Peters and some Communist journalists, as reported in the Kievan Izvestia.

Let me remind you [said Peters to the journalists] how the workers of Petrograd responded to my appeal for voluntary searchers of bourgeoisie dwellings, and the searches came to be participated in by 20,000 workers (men and women alike), with sailors and Red Guards. Never could the thoroughness with which those volunteers executed their task be sufficiently praised ! And what was the result ? That the searches brought to light 2,000 bombs, 3,000 prismatic binoculars, 30,000 compasses, and many other articles of military equipment, and that for the first time we were enabled to get upon the track of the counter-revolutionary organisations which subsequently were discovered to have sprung up in every part of Russia. But here, in Kiev, unfortunately, popular discipline of the kind does not exist; marauders and speculators are allowed to inflate prices, and to conceal the food needed of the city.

[1] These particulars are taken from the manuscript data with relation to the Crimea which the Denikin Commission collected.

Only yesterday some searchers in our employ unearthed fresh stocks of provisions, so that there confronts me the necessity of subjecting the holders of those stocks to the supreme punitive measure for having failed to comply with my Order concerning Registration of Supplies.

And in the same issue of the Kievan Izvestia there stood published the names of the 127 stockholders in question—as shot.

CHAPTER VII

EXILE AND IMPRISONMENT

WE have seen to a certain extent how some of the prisons and concentration camps of Soviet Russia became filled to overflowing with hostages and others. And the life-conditions in those places were the same as the life-conditions in other like establishments for confinement. " We were not treated like this even in the mines of Siberia under the Tsarist regime, wrote Madame Spiridonova. For example, it was quite a common thing for commandants of prisons and concentration camps to specialise in contrivance of humiliations for their victims—male prisoners being compelled to bury executed comrades, and female prisoners to wash cells clear of the blood after executions, and to scrape plasterings of human brain—including, sometimes, brain dashed from the heads of their own beloved ones—from cell walls. And universally prisoners were outraged by being made to empty lavatories with their bare hands— some ladies of Odessa, in particular, being allotted lavatory work of the kind, and, when nausea overcame them, beaten with rifle butts, whilst even General Roussky was not spared the indignity. Also, political prisoners were lodged in contagious disease cantonments, and, in Theodosia, male members of the bourgeoisie made to sweep the streets in silk hats specially requisitioned for the purpose, and, in Piatigorsk, made to

sweep the streets, and then given the command, " Back now, to your kennels, you dirty dogs ! " [1]

Another practice was unexpectedly to carry out nocturnal searchings of, or nocturnal musterings of, prisoners, and to transfer the latter from upper to basement cells, and keep them there for a day or so before transferring them back again. These transferences were frequent in Moscow, as I myself had reason to know; and in Odessa they were more frequent still. In all cases they constituted a peculiarly futile, senseless expedient for breaking down prisoners' morale.

But concentration camps were par excellence Bolshevist establishments designed for (to quote a protest addressed to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee by a group of Social Revolutionary internees) " the wreaking of a barbarous vengeance, and the breeding of epidemics likely, it is hoped, to remove victims wholesale." Already I have cited statistics of mortality relating to the Kholmogory camp. At Archangel, in 1922, out of 5000 Kronstadt rebels, 1500 alone survived the year.

Certain Bolshevist prisons bear the inscription " Soviet House of Detention." " Detention " ! Why, detention in those establishments is worse than incarceration in the old Tsarist penal institutions. For at least the latter maintained no rules against exercise and reading; neither had they iron shutters so masking the windows as to make absolute darkness a permanent condition within them. Indeed, the cells of the Che-Ka prison in Gorokhovaya Street (Petrograd) have been described as " wooden coffins," for they were absolutely window-less, and measured only 7 feet by 3 1/2 feet, and were made

[1] Many other details of the sort are to be found recorded in the "Memorandum concerning Political Prisoners in Soviet Russia," which the Paris Congress of the Russian Constituent Assembly drew up.

Fuchs, a " public prosecutor " for the Che-Ka of Kharkov.

[See page 222.

to hold eighty-four souls in thirteen of their number on a ground space formerly occupied only by three.[1]

At Kiev there was a cell made out of a converted wall cranny which, according to our Sisters of Mercy, was nevertheless made to hold three prisoners—an old man, his daughter, and the daughter's officer husband. And in 1922 a woman member of the Social Revolutionary Party (Madame Samorodova) had to spend a month in a vault, a subterranean dungeon, which had no window at all, and in which day and night were the same. And some comrades of hers were made to await their trial in Baku in " odoriferous, windowless, lightless caverns where industrial workers lay crowded with professional men," and near which a lad of sixteen had to spend twenty-four hours in a cell heaped with naphtha refuse, and strewn with nails and splinters of glass.[2]

Also, whereas the Tsarist penal establishments allowed prisoners adequate food, what is the case now ? In 1918 it was the custom for prisoners in Moscow to receive, for their daily ration, an eighth of a pound of bread [3] only, and a little rotten potato and cabbage. And though, later, the ration became increased to half a pound of bread, a peasant prisoner still is found writing: " All that we receive is a pound of bread to last us three days, with cabbage soup that is not soup at all, but slop, and destitute of salt." And in the Revolutsionnoye Dielo of February 1922 we read, a propos of some 2000 peasants from Tambov (including women and children): "Wandering about this prison [the Vyborg Prison at Petrograd] are horrible shadows rather than human beings. All day long the place resounds with moans of people dying of hunger at the rate of many daily." Nor

[1] See No. 15 of the Socialistichesky Vestnik.
[2] See Nos. 33 and 34 (1924) of Revolutsionnaya Rossia. [3] The British public may be reminded that the Russian pound is equivalent only to nine-tenths of the pound avoirdupois.

for months at a time were prisoners allowed to receive food parcels from their relatives, as a form of punishment universally employed for extorting additional evidence.[1] And the result of all this was such a mortality from malnutrition that 75 per cent. of the total of prison hospital deaths can be ascribed to this cause, and even an official document reproduced by the Bolshevist press had to admit that the governor of the Taganka Prison had declared 40 per cent. of the mortality in his establishment to have come of the malnutrition factor.[2] At the same time, we must concede that these revelations, added to certain personal enquiries, did succeed in making a temporary impression upon the more " sentimental " members of the Bolshevist Party. In particular, a certain Diakonov contributed to the Izvestia an article which, headed "A Cemetery of Still Living Bodies," described some of the cells attached to the inquisitorial department of the Taganka Gaol, and declared these cells to be choked with fever patients with temperatures ranging from 38° to 40° C, and with influenza and typhus sufferers as well. And the poor wretches, the article said, had in many cases been ill for a week or more without anyone so much as thinking of seeing to their removal to hospital; whilst, though the temperature in the cells stood as low as 7° or 5°, or even 3° C, all that patients had for covering was a thin blanket—nor even that in some instances, but only a few wisps of clothing. Nor were sheets or pillows provided : the patients just were lying on the dirty floor, or else on what looked like empty mattress covers.

[1] In addition to which it may be said that in many prisons the authorities either made food parcels common property—that is to say, divided the meagre contents of the parcels amongst a large number of prisoners—or confiscated the contents themselves.

[2] This document was reproduced in the Izvestia of December 26, 1918.

[3] See the Izvestia of December 4, 1918.

And not for months past, at least two months, could the prisoners' linen have been washed, whilst the prisoners themselves had emaciated features, almost transparent frames, and eyes like the eyes of people at death's door. If, said the article, even a single attendant had been present to wait upon the invalids (who numbered about a hundred), things might have been different; whereas no orderly at all was present.

The doctor who accompanied me around the prison had been in the State prison service for twenty years, and officiated under more than one regime. Amongst other things, he told me that the deaths from inanition had been very numerous of late, and that daily typhus and influenza were reaping their toll. ... In every corridor, and in every cell, of the " solitary confinement" portion did I see the same filth, the same emaciated countenances, the same hungry and imploring eyes, the same thin hands stretched out to us through the bars. For in that place there were over a thousand victims moaning, and begging to be released, and crying out that they had been in prison for two or three months without inquiry made, or even for a year. . . . That visit has haunted me ever since like a nightmare : and, now that I have adduced the facts, let those of my fellow-men who still have left to them a shred of sympathy and understanding try to imagine for themselves what mental and physical tortures are implied by such an abode of horror. For even the worst crime conceivable would be purged if a person had to spend a month within those massive walls, and behind those iron bars : whereas within those massive walls and behind those iron bars there are persons guiltless of any crime at all. Once more I ask, what worse, what more absolute, torture could be imagined than to be thrown into a cage for months, and deprived of warmth and air and rest and ability to move about, and fed only at rare intervals, and, until death at length gives release, undergo a living death through vermin ? Frankly, such a system is a disgrace to our Communist Republic, an infamy no longer to be tolerated. Governors, justices, commissaries, officials, Communists of the ranks, do you hear what I say ? Then hasten to repair the evil, and do not wait until further bloody

tragedies have resulted. Yes, I say! Open up those graves in which still living human beings lie buried. Or, if official routine cannot be hastened otherwise, let a general amnesty be declared. For not even the release of prisoners by the hundred would injure us as the existence of the dungeons which I have described is doing daily. Communism and the Revolution need no bolstering up with creation of " houses of the dead." Other means of defending the Revolution exist.

In the Crimea, in 1921, a well-known man of letters, a man advanced in years, was thrown into a dungeon for six days in company with so many prisoners, male and female, that none of them could ever lie down. Yet one day still more prisoners arrived ; after which even standing room became impossible until a certain proportion of the inmates had been removed and shot. And during the first few days of the captives' confinement they were given not a scrap of food—the supposition being, apparently, that all were due for execution. Only cold water was issued, and that but once a day. Nor, later, were any food parcels allowed, and any relatives who arrived with them were dispersed with blank volley-firing.

Before me lies a memorandum addressed by the Political Branch of the Red Cross to the Praesidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in 1922. It begins with the words :

We, the Political Branch of the Red Cross, consider it our duty to draw the attention of the Praesidium to the aggravation of the position of political prisoners in Russia which is purposely being effected. Beyond doubt the conditions of such prisoners' confinement are approximating once more to those which obtained during the early and the most acute days of the civil conflict.

Below, also, follows a description of what exile could be like from the pen of a Madame R. M. Youdovicha,

a Muscovite lady who was banished to the Northern Dvinsk region during the autumn of 1921. Relating her journeyings from local prison to local prison, she says:

It was late at night when we reached the transport prison at Vologda, and the staff met us with obscene abuse before stripping us of most of our belongings, down to the few spoons and cups which seemed to us so precious in our desperate, helpless flight. For myself, I felt so indignant that I protested. But of course this proved useless. And when we were herded to the cells, and I reached the door of the female ward, I fairly gasped, for there are no words really capable of describing the horrors of a place where, in almost total darkness, thirty-five or forty half-dead and half-alive creatures were crawling about over a mass of filthy, disgusting mud between walls all plastered over with excretions and other nastinesses. And morning brought yet another horror in the shape of the food, when we prisoners had served to us some fish in a state of putrefaction, and nothing else — not even gruel was issued, since the authorities appropriated all cereals for themselves. You see, this prison of Vologda was a central prison, and therefore exiles passed through it in a continuous stream, and from every quarter of Russia. Hence the confusion was incredible, and no one made it his business to see what went on in the kitchens, where the utensils were never washed, and the dirt and the food all were cooked together, and worms allowed to choke up the boilers and their foul, greasy, permanently simmering mess of " soup." And, after Vologda, Viatka, where conditions struck me as a little better than in the former place, for the cells were a trifle larger, and perhaps a trifle less filthy. Yet when I asked whether I could wash myself my companions simply pointed towards the general ward, and said that I " had better go and see." In that ward I found about forty women. Yet amongst them all I was the only political internee. Nine collapsible bunks, the bare wood of which was destitute of mattresses or pillows, had stretched upon them some corpse-like female figures. And other such figures were scattered about the floor—all in

mere tatters of garments, if not practically nude. And I scarcely needed to be told that the prison's cement floors were seldom washed. In fact, never have I spent a night of horror to equal that first night of mine at Viatka, for, in addition, the room swarmed with vermin, and constantly my companions kept moaning and tossing in their sleep, or begging for water, since the majority of them were sickening for fever. And, sure enough, when morning arrived seventeen of them were found to have developed typhus. Yet, when the rest of us asked that they should be removed to hospital, our petition proved useless. And at eight o'clock our breakfast of " soup " was brought. Nor have I ever seen anything to resemble it, since it consisted of putrid chunks of horse head, some scraps of horsehair and hide, some rags, and morsels of a sort of jelly-like substance, all floating about together in a dark-coloured, evil-smelling liquid. And with it went some unpeeled potatoes. Yet upon this horrible concoction the women threw themselves with a perfectly animal avidity, and, gulping it down, proceeded to fight even for the potato skins before, within a few minutes, in not a few cases, vomiting. And so the day dragged on, and in time was replaced with the horrors of the night.

The same writer mentions that, as she had begun to feel ill just before she left Moscow, she had notified the authorities to that effect, and added : " Seeing, also, that I have been deprived of my clothes, I am less than ever in a condition to proceed northward," but that it had been replied : " Nevertheless you will proceed as bidden." Indeed, such deportation without warning, without any time to collect effects, became the general rule and use for the special humiliation of political exiles. Thus, on the night of October 19, 1920, a party of bourgeois who had been seized and allotted hard labour were haled from the Ivanovsky camp near Moscow, and dispatched for Ekaterinburg. The consignment included certain Socialists known to every educated soul in Russia, and I will cite a few

details of the journey as jotted down by one of those who had to make it:

Amongst the ninety-six persons who were taken from the camp were persons of sixty and seventy, and invalids at that; yet their appeals to be left behind proved useless. Many, indeed most of us, had no warm clothing, and though the weather had hitherto been comparatively warm, it happened, as luck would have it, that that day had brought us the first big snow-fall of the season. Moreover, many had merely lapti [1] for footwear, and no private stock of provisions for the journey, whilst, finally, we had to do our packing so hurriedly as to leave behind not a few of our most cherished possessions. The affair began at about eight, or half-past eight, o'clock in the evening, when we were told to go into an ice-cold, glass-covered gallery and wait. We waited for over an hour. Then, everything that we were taking with us having been carefully inspected, we were led into a courtyard where the roll was called several times over, and so, under a strong escort of " Home Defence Force " men, to the Northern Railway goods station—the guards constantly abusing us en route, and telling us to mend our pace, despite that many of us were elderly, and carrying baggage at that. Past midnight it was when we reached the station, but no train was ready, nor any responsible authority to receive and dispatch the prisoners. So in that windswept spot, and exposed to from ten to fifteen degrees of frost and a snowstorm, we waited for three and a half hours. Meanwhile, at about one o'clock in the morning, or a little later, we were joined by about thirty other prisoners from the Andronievsky camp : and as soon as they halted near us we were surprised to recognise amongst them men who had only a few weeks ago been transferred from our own camp to the Andronievsky, on the strength of a tale that they were going to be sent home again! Moreover, even in our own contingent of ninety-six there were from thirty to thirty-five Poles who ought, of course, to have been treated as prisoners of war rather than as they were being treated now. However, at about half-past three the entraining did begin. Yet, seeing that it was not until nine or ten o'clock that the train started, why should we have

[1] Peasant low shoes of bark.

been compelled so to hurry our packing overnight, and then to wait on the cold railway line for so many hours ? The rolling-stock consisted of sixty compartments, for it was not only we ourselves (the prisoners from the Ivanovsky and the Andronievsky camps) that were travelling, but also a hundred prisoners from the camp at Ordin, some scores from the camps at Novo-Peskovsk and Pokrovsk, five hundred students for the " political course for Red commanders " (these were ex-White officers from Kolchak's and Denikin's armies), and four hundred and fifty candidates for the same course. In fact, the total train load amounted to 1400 or 1500 souls. And en route, and when we had reached Ekaterinburg, we learnt the following concerning the students and the candidates. The former, we learnt, were ex-White officers who had already been theoretically admitted to posts in the Red Army, but had first to be put through a short term of " political study," lasting six weeks, and including lectures from leading members of the Communist Party on the tenets of Soviet rule and Communism. And since the students now being sent with us to Ekaterinburg had almost completed their course, they would, within a few days, be given positions in the Soviet forces. Hitherto they had not been treated as prisoners, but allowed to live together in the old Alexandrovskoye Military School at Moscow, and then, on the 18th—rather, during the early hours of the 19th—of the month, transferred, without reason given, to the Kozhukhovsky camp (which stood twelve or fifteen versts from Moscow), and now, during the night of the 20th, were travelling with ourselves to Ekaterinburg. And as for the candidates, they had been summoned to Moscow, for the course, from various provincial camps, and, whilst in Moscow, awaiting their turn for the curriculum (which turn would arrive only when the full students had completed theirs), had had no restriction placed upon their movements, but had been living, some of them in different Muscovite hostels, and the rest in private houses, with merely a common obligation to answer a daily roll-call. But on the night of which I am speaking (October 20) the section living in private houses - had no sooner presented itself for roll-call than, just as it was, and without any warm clothes, and without even permission to go and bid farewell to its comrades in the hostels, it had

been dispatched en route for the railway station, and there, as we have seen, entrained for Ekaterinburg. . . . The train in which we travelled lacked any heating apparatus; nor was the food issued to us prisoners out of keeping with that and the journey's many other lackings.

Probably no one who is not familiar with political life in Russia to-day would easily believe that Bolshevists could imprison three-year-old children and folk of over ninety. Yet I remember an eighty-year-old " spy " being set to share my captivity in the Butyrka, and men, women, and children being taken from their homes en masse. And it is not only that the prisons of contemporary Russia are made places of horror for their inmates. They are made places of horror also for those inmates' relatives. For it is only by chance that those relatives ever hear of their beloved ones' fate, or parents come to know whether their sons are alive or dead. In fact, relatives are not allowed even the last consolation of all. They are not allowed to accord their dear ones decent burial. Again, I can adduce a case in Moscow in 1920 where the Che-Ka informed the parents of a lad of sixteen that their son had been arrested and tried in company with other members of a tennis club, and shot on December 4—whereas subsequently it transpired that the lad had not been shot until the 22nd ; the false information being given to the parents merely to prevent any possibility of their being able to present an appeal for their son, and so, according to Latzis, to waste the Che-Ka's time. And in the already quoted memorandum issued by the Political Branch of the Red Cross we read :

> In 1921 the relatives of four hundred persons whom the Secret Branch arrested during the night of April 14 were unable, for three weeks, to find out where their kinsfolk were. Consequently they could not supply them with necessaries and food.

In Latzis' statistical articles he cites, as a proof of the " humane procedure of the Soviet Power," the fact that during the years 1918 and 1919 the Central Che-Ka " arrested only 128,000 persons throughout the vast area of Soviet Russia," and adds: "Is that the 'unbridled tyranny' to which certain of our citizens never lose a chance of referring ? " Well, if we remember that, according to official statements published for the year 1918, the then holding capacity of Russia's prisons amounted only to 36,000, Latzis' figures will seem to us sufficiently large ! [1]

Also, Latzis stated in his articles that " during the years 1918 and 1919 over half the detained regained their liberty."

But perhaps we shall be asked why so many innocent persons were detained at all ? The reason is that if a whole institution, if a whole unit becomes involved in a conspiracy, the only way to prevent the guilty few from escaping is to arrest the institution or the unit as a whole. Then, when one has made careful enquiry, and sifted the innocent from the guilty, one can, with prudence, liberate the former.

What a Bolshevist method of detecting the guilty ! And inviolability of the person? Well, to a Bolshevist inviolability of the person is "so much bourgeois prejudice."

Rakovsky also once declared that people were arrested in Soviet Russia only if they had committed a crime. But the facts belie him. And so did the Red Cross memorandum which I have quoted :

The decree issued by the Praesidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on February 1, 1919, that invariably any prosecuting counsel of the All-Russian Che-Ka should complete his investigations within a month of those investigations' inception, is not being carried out.

[1] At times the Butyrka, though built to hold 1100 prisoners only, contained over 3000.

And so it has always been. On October 29, 1919, Peters declared that, of the 2000 persons arrested to date, every one had been examined, whereas, as a matter of fact, these persons had been lying in prison for months without any investigation—the Che-Ka having altogether failed to unravel its own prison-administrative tangle. And what obtained in 1919 was obtaining as late as in 1922, after the Che-Kas had taken on the guise of the State Political Department, and is obtaining now, even though an official decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has ordained that all prisoners be questioned within forty-eight hours of their arrest, and informed of the accusation preferred against them within a fortnight, and have their examination complete within two months—after which they must either be released or brought to trial; and that, for a prisoner to be detained for over two months, a special petition must be presented to the Supreme Judicial Authority. As though anyone would believe in such a " Habeas Corpus Act " ! " Let no exceptions be made to this decree." Well, none possibly could be made !

Recently the tenth Congress of Soviets was furnished by the Commissariats of the Interior and Justice with figures representing that on December 1, 1922, the number of political offenders dwelling in exile was 10,638, and of political offenders dwelling in prisons 48,819. And those figures applied to Central Russia alone !

On July 1, 1923, there were prisoners in gaol, said the registers of the State Political Department, to the number of 72,685, with two-thirds of them political prisoners.[1]

[1] This was, of course, in addition to thousands of others who had been deported to outlying provinces, or thrown into the prisons of Tiflis and Kukais.

Also, comparing these returns with the statistics of prison deaths for 1918 already cited, the social composition of the Soviet's captives seems to have altered little in five years, for we see that peasants and industrial workers still form some forty per cent. of the total, with the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal itself giving the social proportions for 1923 as " Intellectuals 34 per cent., peasants 29, bourgeois 26, and industrial workers 11." [1] In fact, never has it been the case that the Red Terror was directed exclusively against one class alone, since in Russia, as everywhere else, terrorism has to fight all classes with the one weapon of tyranny.

As regards exile, a phenomenal number of persons have been deported since 1921,[2] and every one of the old regime's destinations for exiles has been restored for the purpose—Turkhestan, the Roumanian frontier, Solovetsky Island, and the rest. " In the remote North, in famine-stricken Turkhestan, and in dreary villages and townships in the centre there are living persons who have been wrested from their dear ones, and are without food, without the rudimentary amenities of civilisation, and under the shadow of death." The words are from the " Appeal " issued by the Berlin Society for the Aid of Political Prisoners and Exiles in Russia.

Already I have spoken of the Portaminsk camp on the shores of the Arctic Ocean as a place whither exiles have been in process of being dispatched from Moscow since the close of last year (1922). And a propos, I may quote the following concerning the camp's life conditions [3] :

[1] See the Zveno (" Link ") for 1928.

[2] So phenomenal, indeed, that even twelve doctors who ventured to criticise the Government's starvation of prisoners policy found themselves deported.

[3] As complementary, of course, to the account already given.

Corpses. Che-Ka of Zhitomir, 1919.

[See page 248.]

In this camp, which is centred around an old monastery that is rapidly falling into decay, there is neither cooking nor heating apparatus, and scarcely any drinking water. Also, the food is insufficient, and no system of medical attendance existent. Lastly, twice a year the roads leading to the place become flooded, and meanwhile the camp is, for long, weary weeks, cut off from the outer world, and the exiles deprived of touch with their fellows.

But apparently the horrors of Portaminsk have not proved sufficient for the authorities, for during the past year Solovetsky also has become a principal place of banishment. The spot where, at this moment, over 200 prisoners are living in abject misery has been pictured as follows :

One desiatina (2.7 acres) of land is all that is allotted to the prisoners, and they are never allowed to leave it; the guards have orders to shoot without challenge any person attempting to do so. And as soon as navigation ceases the island becomes completely cut off from everywhere. And in this place the cruelty which universally distinguishes Communist rule has created conditions under which prisoners have to live condemned to a fate, physical and moral, which has not its equal in history—no, not even in the tragic history of the mines of Siberia.

Further details concerning Solovetsky are given by the writer of a letter published in No. 31 of Revolut-sionnaya Rossia. The letter runs :

One main thing which distinguishes this place of exile from the mines of Siberia of Tsarist days lies in the fact that every official in the place, from the highest to the lowest (the commander alone excepted), is an ex-criminal of the ordinary type, himself engaged in serving a term of detention. And this choice body of officials consists mostly of Che-Ka employees who have been convicted of peculation or extortion or assault or some other offence against the ordinary penal code. But, removed from all social and legal control as they are here, these " trusted workers of the

State " can do what they like, and hold at their mercy the entire establishment. For the prisoners have no power of complaint—they have, as a matter of fact, no right of complaint, but must walk hungry and naked and barefooted at their guardians' will, and work for fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, and be punished (even for the most trivial offences) with the cudgel or the lash, and thrust into cells known as " stone pockets," and exposed, without food or shelter, to attacks of mosquitoes in the open . . . And at the further end of the island lies the Savatievsky Hermitage, where the Socialists are imprisoned, and which, like the Solovetsky camp, occupies about a desiatina of land and the corner of a lake. All around it is barbed wire. An edifice normally made to accommodate at the most seventy persons, it has living in it two hundred Socialists of all shades of opinion, and a few Anarchists. The only privilege possessed by its inmates is that, so long as they keep to their compound, they can do what they like in it— they can starve in it, they can fall ill in it, they can die or go mad in it, without the least obstacle being placed in their way by the administration, which would not for a moment think of interfering with matters so purely personal and private. And whenever they seek an interview with the commandant he replies to them with sheer effrontery . . . What affects the prisoners most is not the actual conditions of the place, but the knowledge that always, for eight months of the year, life will have to be dragged out in complete isolation from the rest of the world . . . Prisoners falling dangerously ill, or losing their reason, are given no medical attendance, but must go on living with the rest in the cramped, noisy cells . . . Seldom is it that letters dispatched from the island reach their destination . . .

Six weeks only have passed since the book from which this quotation is taken was published ; yet already the horrors which it describes are coming to be known in the world—already we keep hearing of cases of suicide on the island, and learning even from official communiques of mass floggings which not infrequently end in death. Only on February 10 of the present year (1924)

did the thirty-fourth issue of the Izvestia print a " Report on Recent Events in Solovetsky," which included the following :

At six o'clock on the evening of December 19, there occurred in the compound of the Savatievsky Hermitage (which forms part of the Solovetsky camp) a most regrettable incident, in that a number of prisoners came into collision with the Red Guard detachment which has charge of the establishment.

This has been the fate of the Socialists on the island. So what of the other political prisoners there ? We receive the answer from a correspondent of the Social-istichesky Vestnik:

In addition to the concentration camp for Socialists, there exists, on Solovetsky, a special prison called " the Kremlin " which stands away from where the Socialists are confined, and is a world to itself, since it has congregated in it, firstly, felons pure and simple, men saturated with the old habits and morals of the criminal sphere ; secondly, "economists," or men convicted of financial offences, acceptance of bribes, peculation, and the like; and thirdly, a few political prisoners, consisting mostly of ecclesiastics and convicted " counter-revolutionaries." And there is no describing the horrors of the Kremlin's regime. True, the cells stand always unlocked, but merciless floggings take place there, for prisoners are beaten even for the slightest mistake in a task (the warders and the foreman of working parties alike walk about with sticks), and altogether punished in ways which are worthy only of the Inquisition. For example, in summer prisoners are stripped naked, and left exposed in the open until their bodies have become half-devoured with mosquitoes. Or else they are thrown, for seven days at a time, into pitch-dark dungeons too cramped to admit of their inmates lying down. And in winter time they are thrown into a tower whose inner walls are permanently coated with ice. And always the food is horrible, for the officials filch the prisoners' rations. And the women prisoners' position is worse still; they are still more helpless than the men, and can win respect neither by origin, nor by

upbringing, nor by habits, but lie completely in the power of the authorities, and at any time may have their " services " demanded, and made to barter away their virtue for a bread ration : so that in only too many cases they become infected with one or another form of venereal disease. And at all times they are liable to tuberculosis and scurvy. Thus the camp is a community of slaves in the worst sense of the term, for it lacks all vestige of prisoners' rights, and has to live under conditions all tending to a detestable system of starvation, torture, outrage, and assault. In fact, it is a system which would disgrace the Bolshevists even if they were applying it to the worst of criminals: whereas those to whom they are applying it are merely worsted political foes, but no more. Hence, to compel victims like these to drag out their lives under such conditions constitutes an iniquity which no words can adequately brand.

Yet Che-Kas have had the impudence to affect to censure Tsarist officialdom for its ill-treatment of political prisoners, though they themselves are a hundred times worse !

At Solovetsky, again, we meet with the " stone pockets," or dens which are said to have been contrived during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Into these dens prisoners would be thrown for a week or a fortnight at a time, although the cavities were wholly unlighted, and of such a shape as to compel their occupants to remain permanently in a crawling position.[1] Facts of the sort compare badly even with some of the features of the Turkish atrocities of 1876. Yet Pascal, the French Communist, could write in a pamphlet:

The so-called Russian Terror . . . never began, and has never, to my French mind, been a Terror at all. Hence I laugh when I hear the Che-Ka called " horrible," for I myself have had opportunities of observing its discretion and leniency—almost its good-nature !

[1] Some of the foregoing details are from a letter actually written from Solovetsky by a prisoner, and dated March 8, 1924.

CHAPTER VIII

" THE PRIDE AND THE JOY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY "

How naturally instinct leads the dregs of all political parties and all shades of political opinion to gravitate to, and hang about, the Tuileries !—HERZEN, 1850.

ONCE Zinoviev said : " The Che-Ka is the pride and the joy of the Communist Party " : but though commendation is a matter of personal opinion, I myself believe that Latzis came nearer to the truth when he said : " The Che-Ka is at least the best that Soviet institutions can evolve,"—and thereby pronounced the death warrant of Sovietism.

One of the prime causes of the degeneration of Che-Ka activity into tyranny and violence was the quality of the Che-Ka personnel. Political fanaticism alone will not explain the horrors which I have described. It is only sadists and madmen, it is only social elements which life has rejected, and greed of gain and lust of power have attracted, that can engage in bloodshed on such a colossal scale. Yet the mentality even of a healthy-minded individual would have broken down amid the atmosphere of orgy which has prevailed in Russia for five years past: and therefore a type study of the sort of functionary who figured on, and was employed by, Che-Kas is bound to offer both the alienist and the historian a most interesting field of investigation. Yes, only a sadist could find pleasure

in such bloody work, or in singing the praises of such work as once the author of some doggerel verses called "The Che-Ka's Smile" sang them in Tiflis when he declared that:

" No richer joy, no sweeter sound, exists Than sound of life cut short, and bones a-crack. My eyes grow dim, my heart cries breathlessly : ' Away ! Against the wall! And shoot!' "

For we all know how cruelty may mate with sensuality, and an Eidouk show himself equally capable of writing hysterical rubbish and of slaying his fellows for a " revolutionary cause." And we know that from the first the Che-Kas were forced to draw their staffs mainly from the criminal population, and that Dzherzh-insky's memorandum of February 17, 1922, saying that " the punitive apparatus of a revolutionary authority should be constituted of an institute of revolutionary judges and prosecutors chosen by the people, and vested with an integrity of crystal spotlessness (seeing that they are the functionaries in whose hands the supreme authority is to repose)," was setting forth, in this connection, things as they ought to have been rather than things as they were. Yet the memorandum continues :

In point of fact, the personnel of our Che-Kas is a personnel chosen with great care from amongst tested members of the Communist Party. Hence that personnel consists of individuals incorruptible of idea, and irreproachable of antecedent. Only by employing such persons could our Che-Kas hope to perform the duties which the revolutionary proletariat has entrusted to their charge.

Well, even if we take it as a fact that there was a single word of truth in this, the atmosphere of tyranny which soon spread over the country would still have ended by demoralising not only any "institute of judges " of the kind mentioned, but also every decent

element amongst the population. Nay, Latzis, the Che-Ka's own statistician, himself had to admit that constant changes of Che-Ka employees were found necessary.

However honest a Che-Ka employee may be, and however crystal-pure his heart, the conditions of Che-Ka work are such as in time to affect his nervous system, and to atrophise his ethical sense. Indeed, many a young Communist has thereby been prevented from forming his character, and set upon the road of moral deterioration.

One such young Communist, an ex-plumber in the employ of the Che-Ka of Yaroslav as a " people's prosecutor," began his work well, but, later, took to liquor. And he had a friend who played the accordion, and the pair would drink in company. And it was mostly when he was drunk that he did his questioning of prisoners, whilst his accordion-playing friend sat by him to keep up his spirits. Yet so illiterate was this ex-plumber " people's prosecutor " that he could not even inscribe his sentences of death, but had to scrawl across the paper, " To be put out as a White."

The All-Russian Che-Ka held its sessions in Moscow, and constituted a state within a state, and could requisition blocks (indeed, scores of blocks) of buildings for its exclusive use, and maintain its own tailor's establishment, laundry, restaurant, toilet saloon, boot-maker's shop, locksmith's forge, larders, and cellars—the latter, of course, well stocked with the best of " confiscated " food and wine. And it was not only actual members of the Che-Ka that could make use of these amenities without incurring an obligation to render account. The Che-Ka's employees could do the same. Hence, when everyone else was going hungry the Che-Ka member or employee would be receiving his ration of sugar and butter and flour and the rest, whilst every

theatre in the place had to send the Che-Ka free tickets for every performance. And practically the same obtained in the provinces, where everywhere we see the local Che-Ka occupying the most desirable premises. When a body of that sort was instituted at Sebastopol it, as a matter of course, took possession of Kist's Hotel, whilst, as regards Odessa, the local Che-Ka built a whole settlement for its own benefit, and speedily caused to spring up there every species of establishment likely to conduce to the comfort of a " citizen," from a barber's shop to a cinema palace. The Che-Ka of Zhitomir, again, had its own dramatic society.[1] And though a correspondent wrote to the Obstchoye Dielo that "the drunken sailor and the small boy with belt and huge revolver, our two hitherto types of Che-Ka employee, are becoming things of the past, and replaced with people's prosecutors of urbane address and legal, or budding legal, origin," the change seemed the more revolting, so terribly did the sleek, flashy aspect of the fellows who now held power of life and death over their fellow men clash with the universal popular impoverishment. " The name of our Che-Ka must not only become famous. It must also become, and remain, innocent of spot." How was this going to be achieved when Moscow alone contained twenty thousand Che-Ka agents drawing special rations, and organised into a host of cliques ? As early as the year 1919 the All-Russian Che-Ka had come to have 2000 persons on its personal staff, with three-fourths of them natives of Latvia. Indeed, Letts, from the beginning, obtained, and retained, a special position in this regard, and would be engaged by Che-Kas in batches of whole families, and render those Che-Kas

[1] As an instance of this Che-Ka's taste for drama it may be mentioned that one of the most terrible of all extant photographs of mutilated corpses is one of victims slain by this Che-Ka.

faithful service. Thus our modern Letts might be likened to the ancient mercenaries. So much was this the case that the Muscovite Che-Ka came to be known as " the Lettish Colony." A propos of the attraction which the institutions of Moscow had for Latvia's population, the Bulletin of the Left Social Revolutionary Party remarked : " Letts flock to the Extraordinary Commission of Moscow as folk emigrate to America, and for the same reason—to make their fortunes." And the fact that very few Letts knew a single word of Russian was in no way held to disqualify those immigrants from being entrusted with inquisitions and domiciliary searches, or even with the filling in of returns. Whence arose amusing anecdotes not wholly amusing to the victims.

The truth is that, on the Bolshevists sending out a call for "idealists," there looked up to them mostly the scum of the population, until Krylenko himself had to admit that " into the Che-Kas there have crept criminal elements." For that matter, could it reasonably be expected that an ex-circus clown and an ex-brothel keeper should remain the only officiants of their kind ? [1] And though it may not have been the invariable rule that Che-Ka employees were criminals (for example, Douzirev, the Grand Duke Vladimir's ex-coachman, who took service under the Che-Ka of Odessa, may conceivably have been an otherwise respectable man) the fact remains that, as time went on, persons of the thief-murderer-swindler type insinuated themselves in large numbers into the best posts, and there exist scores of

[1] Lenin's dictum on the point was that " for every hundred decent members of Che-Kas there are ninety-nine rogues." Yet the fact in no way depressed him. As early as 1905 he said: " Our party is not meant to be a boarding-school for young ladies. For the very reason that a rogue is a rogue he may prove the more useful." Naturally, he knew what he was talking about.

instances to that effect. Some of these instances are to be found in The Che-Ka. For example, once it was found that the headquarters of a gang of burglars which had been operating in the town of Ekaterinodar was the residence of the local " people's prosecutor," and that a certain Albert who had been in the employ of the local Che-Ka's detective department, and sent to the University of Kuban at the expense of the League of Communist Youth, had been the gang's principal leader. And there are instances of the same kind in the materials collected by the Denikin Commission, so that they constitute a perfect picture gallery of past and present malefactors. Nay, it fell to the lot of the Muscovite Che-Ka itself to discover that certain of its principals were not unconnected with cases of "banditism" which occurred ; whilst in 1919 an employee of the Odessan Che-Ka revealed the fact that " criminals amongst us have been forging orders for carrying out domiciliary searches, and extracting money from victims, and robbing them," whilst the victims in question had actually been employees of the Che-Ka's own " operative department "[1] In fact (partially, perhaps, owing to the southerliness of its climate) Odessa furnished more instances of " banditism" on the part of Soviet-commissioned officials than any other locality in Russia ; and once a local lawyer, when questioned on the point by Denikin's Commission, replied :

In this part of the world it has never taken long for our criminal elements to become adapted to Soviet rule, for they seem to have a natural affinity for it. Recently there arose a rumour that " Comrade Michael," the secretary of our Che-Ka, was none other than the notorious thief known as " Mishka [1] the little Japanese " ; and though the authorities straightway published an official dementi of the rumour (they

[1] A Russian diminutive of the name Michael.

did so in No. 47 of the Izvestia), to say that" Mishka, the little Japanese " had no connection whatsoever with the Che-Ka's secretary, no more than a few days had passed before there was published in the papers (the Communist, I think, was one of them) a letter from Michael Vinitsky (" Mishka the Little Japanese ") himself, to say that, whatever else he might have been in the past, he had been a lifelong protagonist of Communist ideals, and robbed only the bourgeois. And with that " Comrade Michael " (Vinitsky) launched himself upon a Communistic career in earnest, and transformed his band of ex-thieves and burglars into a " Fifty-Fourth Soviet Regiment," and created himself the regiment's commanding officer, and, when the general mobilisation of local Communists took place, co-opted to the post of the regiment's political commissary the "Comrade Feldmann" who, throughout, had been the life and soul of the Che-Ka's executive committee.[1]

Again, an ex-burglar of Odessa, one Kotovsky,[2] was appointed to the command of a Red Division.[3] Yet at least this fellow displayed a certain amount of decency in his new post, whereas, as a rule, his kind soon harked back to their original bestiality, and, sometimes, to their original job. Thus a certain Ossip Letny acted for a while as administrative chief at Tsaritsin, but left that post in order again to head a band which carried out countless robberies and murders. And in January 1921 one Khadzhi-Elias, president of a revolutionary tribunal, had to be shot for having taken part in an organisation for perpetrating extortion and theft under cover of the phrase " Warfare against Counter-Revolution," even though up to the time of his detection he had been allowed to conduct trials solely according to his " revolutionary sense," and to pass sentences of death on his

[1] See Margoulies' Years of Fire, pp. 178, 179.

[2] In view of this official's original profession, it is not without interest to note that his surname, of patronymical formation, is based upon the Russian word for "cat."

[3] See the Obstchoye Dielo of March 1, 1921.

own responsibility, and to carry them out with his own hand. The number of killings which he is said thus to have perpetrated is truly appalling.[1]

On one occasion the Che-Ka's Weekly asserted that " the late bourgeois dispensation had for its principal adjuncts corruption and forgery." Would the journal repeat the statement, now that the Soviet Government has had actually to organise " weeks for combating bribery " ?

Then, to touch briefly upon the trial of a man called Kossarev. This man had been a member of the Committee of Inspection and Control, a body formed to review the " legality " or otherwise of decrees issued by the provincial Che-Kas. Yet now, when arraigned before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal on a charge of having substituted a car-load of firewood for a carload of frozen meat, he was found to have served a previous sentence of ten years in the Siberian mines for having robbed and murdered an old woman ! And in 1922, when the Revolutionary Tribunal of Moscow tried a certain Taraboukin, an ex-bandit, and the president of one of the provincial tribunals, for extortion, it found that he and a friend had once murdered a jeweller, and stolen twenty million roubles-worth of stock !

Thus the Bolshevists could be ruthless towards their own agents : but they were so only when those agents had been too brazen in their robbing or accepting of bribes. Wherefore cases of the sort formed the exception rather than the rule. As a rule, an official could commit an offence with impunity, for always it was found that, though appeals might be presented for " extinction of the rascals who are wrecking our Soviet system " (an appeal of the sort being presented by, in particular, Zachs, whilst serving as Dzherzhinsky's temporary

[1] See the Posledniya Novosty of March 2, 1921.

substitute on the Muscovite Che-Ka),[1] it had to be realised that those "rascals" had become indispensable to the system. Indeed, I could cite many cases where officials were charged with offences, sentenced to death, released, and given superior posts.

The Head of the Petrograd Che-Ka once proudly told a meeting of Che-Kas of the Northern Region that was held during the October of 1918 that " My Che-Jut looks with disapproval upon the methods of the old Secret Police, and particularly disapproves of the employment of agents-provocateurs" : whereas the truth is that, beginning with the case of the Mr. Lockhart whom Peters invited to attend a fictitious meeting of a fictitious " Committee of White Guards " (later even the Pravda admitted that it had been a fictitious committee), the working of the Che-Ka's " punitive apparatus " was carried on exclusively by means of an officially (and clumsily) organised and sanctioned and operated system of provocation. Thus, the fifth paragraph of a secret Order issued by the Special Branch over Dzherzhinsky's signature on December 5, 1920, recommended that, " for the detection of foreign agencies in our territories, there be organised pretended White Guard associations." And this circular would seem to have been present to Latzis' mind when he inspired a special Kievan piece of political provocation which was worked by pseudo " Chilean " and " Brazilian " " Consuls " (who, in reality, of course, were employees of the provincial Che-Ka), and adopted for its plan of operations offers to help refugees to escape abroad, and those refugees' subsequent betrayal as " counterrevolutionaries." The upshot was that in due course the Krasny Mech, or " Red Sword" (the organ of the Political Department of the All-Ukrainian Che-Ka)

[1] See the Che-Ka's Weekly, No. 5.

published (on August 18, 1918) a statement that a huge counter-revolutionary conspiracy had been brought to light under " Count Albert Petrovich Pirro, Brazilian Minister to the Ukrainian Soviet Government," and that this " Count Pirro " and four confederates had been shot, and that investigations with regard to certain others connected with the affair were now in progress. Well, certainly a lady of the name of Poplavskaya was shot at that period, for having " prepared to travel to France and warn M. Clemenceau of an impending visit of Communists for secret propaganda " ; but we know that no " Count Pirro," as such, can have been put to death, for the reason that the " Count" was none other than an agent provocateur employed by the Che-Ka—though to this day the precise identity of the Che-Ka employee who impersonated the pseudo-diplomatist has been kept a secret.

Again, in 1920 some foreign-published Russian journals issued accounts of Odessan doings of a "Baroness Stern," who resembled "Count Pirro" in so far as that her proceedings at least smacked of Bolshevist provocation. For no sooner had she landed at Odessa from Constantinople than local Bolshevist leaders hastened to fete her as a zealous Communist, and to cause her every utterance to be quoted in the press, even in the Izvestia itself. Then she disclosed to the German Consular Agent her " real mission." She had come from Germany, she said, on behalf of the International Red Cross, and was charged to help any German subjects in Russia towards repatriation if they wished, and to supply any Russian subjects who might desire to join the party with false passports. Only, the lady said, those Russian subjects must first hand over to her their valuables, lest those valuables should be confiscated, en route, by the Bolshevists. And, for the rest, the day for departure

having been appointed, the Che-Ka stepped in, and arrested all those who had accepted the fictitious offers of help.

And another counterpart of our " Count Pirro " was a "Representative of the Danish and Swedish Red Crosses" who took such an interest in White Guard activities as a hobby that he tried to get into communication with certain persons known to myself, and did succeed in doing so as regards such of them as were simple enough to let themselves be landed in the gentleman's toils.

Also a trial of refugees at Anapa was engineered by agents-provocateurs in the employment of the Che-Ka of Vladikavkaz. First that Che-Ka induced refugees to attempt to escape from Anapa to Batoum; and then it caused them to be arrested and shot by the district Che-Ka of Ter. The procedure was the usual one. The first party of refugees (twelve of them) was taken in hand by a " Colonel Baron Zussermann," and accorded, in the half-way town of Vladikavkaz, a hospitable official welcome, with good quarters and entertainment, and, after supper, a visit to the town's theatres and cinema palaces. The only unfortunate circumstance was that the refugees were unaware that the address of " Colonel Baron Zussermann" was also the address of the head of the local Che-Ka. And when a still larger party (of about a hundred) was organised the tragi-comedy ended in the usual shootings.[1]

In the Posledniya Novosty of February 7, 1922, we find a description of the method by which, in 1921, certain places near the Bessarabian frontier caught bourgeois and White Guards when trying to escape abroad. The affair would begin by certain " relatives " of the fugitive sending him a " trustworthy

[1] See the Posledniya Novosty of October 14, 1921.

person " with a commission to see to the fugitive's safe-conduct out of Russia; but always it would come about that, whether by accident or otherwise, both the " trustworthy person " and the " letter of recommendation " fell, en route, into the hands of the Roumanian Che-Ka ; whereupon that Che-Ka would send another " trustworthy person " with another " letter of recommendation," and that person would call upon the refugee concerned, and, after arranging for his journey, and obtaining sufficient evidence against him, carry out the usual arrest.

It has been stated,[1] too, that the commissary attached to the medical mission that was tried in Moscow during the summer of 1920, and shot under heart-rending circumstances, was not a commissary at all, but an agent-provocateur. And certainly the so-called Evsta-fievskaya Street conspiracy of Odessa in 1921 was organised by the keeper of the local Che-Ka prison,[2] and the Tagantsev trial in Petrograd by a sailor named Pankov. And beyond a doubt provocation was employed in the affair of the Petrograd co-operative employees, and again in the huge pro-Polish conspiracy that was unearthed in Smolensk in 1921, when over 1500 persons were arrested. Also, eye-witnesses have stated in connection with the rising in the Ishona region in 1921 that agents-provocateurs figured in officers' uniforms at the sessions of the Omsk Che-Ka, and that a similar ruse was used to foment the Saratov rising of Social Revolutionaries and Menshevists in March of the same year.[3] In this regard, a peculiarly instructive case is the case of the Anarchists Lev Cherny, Fanny Baron, and others, who, in 1921, were shot for

[1] In the Obstchoye Dielo of November 3, 1920.
[2] See the same journal in its issue of October 18, 1921.
[3] See No. 299 of the Volya Rossii, 1921.

alleged forgings of Soviet notes. In their pamphlet concerning the trial the Anarchists of Berlin wrote :

There can be no doubt that our murdered comrades had no connection whatsoever with the criminal offence whose imputation brought about their execution. Nor can there be any doubt that the idea of issuing the forged notes emanated from the Muscovite Che-Ka itself. In fact, the method of working the affair was that two agents of the Che-Ka (Steiner, alias Kamenny, and a chauffeur) first attached themselves to a group of genuine forgers, and then scraped acquaintance with our Anarchist comrades in order that, to betray them, they might see to the forging of the notes, and to the notes' utterance—the whole being done with the knowledge of, and by the instructions of, the Che-Ka of Moscow.

To realise how likely this hypothesis is we need only recall the telegram with regard to Anarchists sent to Rakovsky.

And a correspondent wrote to the Obstchoye Dielo :

Here, in Odessa, the provincial Che-Ka has formed a new department, a statistical branch acting for the Commissariat of Public Health, the real purpose of which is to organise espionage abroad, and to suppress " military counter-revolution " at home. The new departure has been officially inaugurated in Konelsky's old villa in Fontannaya Street, and has had placed at its head the notorious Zakovsky —a Lett, a member of the All-Russian Che-Ka, and a member of the praesidium of the provincial Che-Ka; whilst the highly responsible post of Ukrainian Resident on behalf of Bessarabia and Galicia and Poland has been given to Mikhailovsky, an employee whom the Muscovite Che-Ka dispatched to Odessa to act as local " Special Agent" in company with his mistress, Ksenia Vladimirovna Mikhailovskaya (nSe von Gerngross), a colonel's daughter, and rejoicing also in the nicknames of " Lialka " and "Adoch-ka." And, with her paramour, this woman (as " Assistant Ukrainian Resident on behalf of etc., etc.," and "Member of the Military Espionage Section in the All-Russian Registration Department") controls a whole network of secret

service, a network covering both Bessarabia and the Polish frontier region, and (like her souteneur and her employees) lives well, denies herself nothing, and justifies her existence by instigating occasional "conspiracies against the Soviet Government." Lately, for example, she and hers professed to have discovered a " White Guard espionage system." But they themselves had organised the system, for " Adochka" is pretty enough to be able to scrape acquaintanceships with officers, and to tell them (quite innocently) that an " officers' association " exists for their benefit, and to prove her assertion by letting her victims read a forged " secret appeal for a combination of forces against Bolshevism, to the end that that tottering and detested Power may fall," and to back up that "appeal" with a reference to Wrangel's advance from Roumania. It need hardly be said that the place where the " appeal" is typed is the new statistical branch of the Commissariat of Public Health. However, if any officer persists in being stupid enough to distrust such " proof," " Adochka" then tenders him a sum of money purporting to emanate from a mysterious " organisation for assisting officers in distress "—which may or may not induce him to set his remaining doubts at rest, and to depart and tell his friends about the equally illegal and fictitious " organisation" referred to, and to form a group of persons willing to join that " organisation," or at least to further its aims. Well, if the officer does that, then the desired end has been achieved, and, for its completion, the detestable piece of treachery needs but the appearance of employees sent by the Che-Ka, some arrests, and some shootings.

For a while, also, the All-Russian Che-Ka maintained a staff of prostitutes for provocation purposes. And in the same connection it utilised even children of from twelve to fourteen years of age, and rewarded them with money and presents and sweets. Again, it would permit prisoners (hundreds of cases of this occurred) to purchase their lives by entering the Che-Ka's secret service. The tragedies that resulted from this practice! Once a young lady who accepted ser-

vice of the kind, to save her father from being shot, fell a prey to such consequent remorse as to burn herself alive. And one of a famous series of essays, entitled " Russia of To-Day," which appeared in the London Times tells of the self-hanging of a woman who had laid false information.[1] Particularly extensive was the provocation directed against the lower strata of the population; wherefore the " Workers' Opposition " within the Communist Party spoke no more than the truth when it said that to Russia's labouring classes Communist nuclei were known as " Communist bloodhound-kennels." " Brood hens," agents-provocateurs, swarmed also in the prisons, where they procured countless trials for accepting bribes, and for forgery and theft, and countless death sentences—for which last they were paid at a percentage rate, whilst, should the case happen to include peculation, the " people's prosecutor" concerned received 10 per cent. of the sum alleged, as a reward for his share in having " discovered " the crime. I myself had personal knowledge of such a " discovery." In the instance referred to, two " people's prosecutors" attended an entertainment given by a Mr. R. and his wife, and induced them to become confidential. Then they arrested them. And when the wife sent word of the occurrence to a lawyer friend of her husband's, and the lawyer approached the praesidium of the Che-Ka, he, to his surprise, found himself added as a third prisoner, on the charge that he had dared to address the Che-Ka without previously obtaining permission. In the end he was exiled to Novospassk.

And, according to The Che-Ka, it was quite a common thing for Che-Ka employees purposely to carry

[1] Published in The Times in 1923, and subsequently translated into Russian.

out domiciliary searches, and mass arrests and ambushes, as a means of supplying themselves with additional stocks of the amenities of life : so that on December 9, 1919, the Soviet of Moscow itself had to admit in its press that " it has been found that houses used by our agents for organising ambushes never fail to be left stripped to the basement." For, as I have already shown, these Che-Ka staffs were, for the most part, mere gangs of thieves. Yet whenever gangs of the sort were seen to be in danger of exposure they found powerful defenders in the real instigators of the crimes, in the leading officials of the local Che-Ka. On September 22, 1918, Peters wrote in No. 2 of the Weekly : " Recently certain enemies of the Soviet Government have been spreading tales that Communists are guilty of bribes-taking, corruption, and false witness. But do not let this depress us. True, a few cases of abuse in this way may have occurred ; yet all that that means is that the New Man has not yet had time to acquire the legal sense." Then Peters added : " Besides, we may rest assured that all such calumnies are but slanderous lies of bourgeois production." And this a lesser light capped with the self-satisfied words : " Charges of the sort are only a proof of our strength, for we are both clever and practical, and have no need to grease the palms of persons weaker than ourselves." Yet why should Mr. Alston have written to Lord Curzon: " Frequently arrested persons have to bail themselves out several times over, under a threat of death," or the Che-Kas of Kuban and Odessa have organised a regular industry of throwing persons into gaol, and reaping a monetary harvest from their release ? [1] Nor did Moscow form any exception to the rule of cor-

[1] See British Parliamentary Paper, "Russia, No. 1 (1919)," p. 36, and the materials collected by the Denikin Commission.

ruption, and the Che-Ka of Tiraspol systematically-smuggled refugees across the frontier, and the same was done by other Che-Kas conveniently near the boundary line. In this connection the Posledniya Novosty of February 7, 1922, declared the Roumanian Che-Ka to be taking the lead in such doings, and went on :

In every small town and village on the Dnieper a swarm of "bookers " exist who, for a fee, will convey fugitives over to Bessarabia " as safely as though on a dreadnought ". . .[1] And, for the most part, the employees of the local Che-Ka do their own touting work, and do it very well . . . The next event is that, just when the refugee is about to start for the river landing-stage, there materialises an unexpected hold-up, and he finds himself and his property under duress. And, inasmuch as that property is usually made up of gold and foreign currency, it can be made to furnish circumstantial evidence of " a contemplated act of treason," and so to furnish also a ground for bargaining. Then, at long last, the victim is allowed to proceed upon his way ... In fact, every Ukrainian town of any size has its own small frontier place whence passage abroad can be effected as from a private " window upon Europe."

But sometimes that " window " would be closed for a while. Early in 1920 the small frontier towns of Podolia were very popular resorts for Odessa and Kiev ; but when spring arrived the whole population of the Dnieperian region was shocked to hear that eighty decomposed bodies had been found in a cave near Kamenka, one of the small Podolian towns concerned, which proved to be bodies of refugees who, supposedly, had long ago reached Bessarabia in safety. However, in localities where Che-Kas were chronically poor, and, therefore, chronically desirous of obtaining rich clients, the journey to foreign climes presented no difficulties

[1] The actual term "dreadnought" was used—transliterated, of course, into Russian characters.

at all; though in winter-time the Che-Ka of Tiraspol would control the traffic by nocturnal holdings-up of persons who attempted to cross the river on the ice without first having paid the Che-Ka its prescribed fee of from 4000 to 5000 Romanov roubles. And any refugee so caught was then led naked through the streets, and beaten with sticks and whips, to " harden him against freezing on the ice when next he crossed." And in Tiraspol also provocation flourished.

On February 16, 1923, the Posledniya Novosty reported that a leading member of a commission which had been appointed to enquire into the working of the O.G.P.U. had committed suicide on the Nikitsky Boulevard, and left for discovery on his body a letter addressed to the Praesidium of the Central Committee. The letter said :

My comrades, although the State Political Department was designed as our principal institution for safeguarding what the working classes have won, and Comrade Unschicht has shown it to need greatly strengthening if its position is ever to become consolidated, merely a glance at the manner of its working has, joined with a brief perusal of the documents concerned, forced me to the conclusion that forthwith I must rid myself of the horrors and the iniquities which, practised in the name of the great principles of Communism, have involuntarily been connived at by myself as a responsible member of the Communist Party, and that only my death can atone for the mistake which I have committed. But first I would send you a request that you recover your senses before it is too late, and cease to disgrace our great teacher Marx, and to alienate the Russian people from Socialism.

And there had been yet earlier cases of prickings of Bolshevist conscience, especially before the mentality of the Bolshevist intelligentsia had wholly assimilated the brutality of Che-Ka work, and whilst yet persons

"with weak nerves and effeminate bodies " (to quote Peters) were finding the sense of moral responsibility for the bloodshed perpetrated under the auspices of the Communist Party, and under those of the proletariat as a whole, too heavy a burden. At all events, up to the beginning of 1919 letters to that effect kept reaching the official press, and we find Petrovsky himself admitting that if Che-Kas persisted in their policy of converting themselves into independent State units, the end could only be a "demoralisation of the State's constructive labours."

And when the Grand Dukes Nicholas, George, Dmitry, and Paul were shot argumentation as to the advisability, or otherwise, of curbing the Che-Kas broke out with greater virulence than ever in the Bolshevist press. Yet though, eventually, theoretical reforms were introduced, the Terror continued its way unchecked, and we need but recall the words of Moroz,[1] that " there is not a sphere of life which the Che-Ka does not watch," to realise that the moral and mental conditions of Bolshevist Russia have never changed.

Take, for example, the type of agent-provocateur or " Government worker " whom Dzerzhinsky's circular encouraged, and largely enabled, to make good his footing in the State. " Life here is terrible," wrote a Pskov correspondent to the Roussky Courier in May 1921:

Spies swarm like ants; they are to be found in every house and every tenement and every street. Not a dwelling does not harbour Communists engaged in watching the occupants. It is as though we were living in a prison. Each man is afraid of the other, and brother looks askance at brother. The place is an accursed hotbed of espionage.

And in 1922 an official document entitled " Duties of

[1] A leading Che-Ka official.

Secret Agents for January " enjoined that during that month

All agents shall (1) keep under observation managements of factories, and educated workers in the same, and make sure of those persons' political opinions, and report any agitation or propaganda against the Soviet Power in which such persons may engage; (2) investigate any gathering purporting to have been organised for amusement (card-playing and the like) only, but in reality for other ends, and, if possible, join in such gathering, and report to the authorities its real purpose and aims, and the names and surnames and addresses of all present; (3) keep under surveillance all educated employees of Soviet institutions, and note their conversation, and discover their political views, and where they spend their leisure, and, in short, communicate to the authorities any suspicious details; (4) attend all intimate or family gatherings of an educated class, discover their trend of opinion, and learn who have been their organisers, and why they have been organised at all; (5) watch for the holding of any communication between educated persons and the intelligentsia of a given district and persons at home or abroad, and report upon the same, accurately and fully.[1]

On the sixth anniversary of the Che-Ka's sanguinary inception Zinoviev wrote :

When the People entrusted the sword to the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission, it was to worthy hands that the People entrusted that weapon. And now the letters O.G.P.U. have become as terrifying to our enemies as were once the letters V.C.K. They are known all the world over.

And certainly this last is true.

When, in Tsarist times, the old " Third Department " was renamed " The Department of State Police," the act of renaming it was declared to be an insult to the intelligence of the Russian community. Yet what else can be said of a " reform " which has done no more

[1] This document was reproduced in the Golos Rossii of April 16, 1922.

than convert the letters " V.C.K." into the letters " O.G.P.U.," and achieved results brilliant to none save those who possess the mentality of a Zinoviev ? Long ago the Russian masses translated the initials " V.C.K." into the phrase " Vsiem Cheloviekam Konetz ! " (" An End to All Men ! "): and though yet it remains to be seen how popular humour will interpret the initials " O.G.P.U.," [1] for the present the rest of the world regards them as standing for an institution alien to democracy, and in no way sanctioning the dictum of Anatole France that " revolutions are bound to demand an irrational toll of victims."

Once the Muscovite Pravda [2] quoted a promise on Trotsky's part that " if we are forced to depart hence, we shall make the whole world hear it when we slam the door behind us, and leave to our successors only ruins and the silence of a cemetery."

That silence is reigning in Russia now. And in " The Ship of Death " we find written :

Reason totters with the effort to understand ; eyes grow dim as they gaze upon things which the scores of generations before us never saw or knew, and the generations after us will scarcely be able to imagine even with the aid of history books. For death, once so mysterious to us, once altogether beyond our understanding, has now lost its terrors, and become, rather, life. No longer the pungent odour of human blood, saturating the air with its heavy vapour, unnerves us. We have ceased to tremble on beholding endless strings of human beings being led to execution, now that we have seen infants shot and writhing in our streets, and cold, mutilated corpses of men and women, victims of an insane terrorism, lying piled in heaps. Moreover, not once, but many times, have we ourselves stood on the Dividing Line. Hence we know those spectacles as a

[1] Since writing these words I have heard that a version already current is Gospody, Pomilouy Oumershikh ! (" Lord, have mercy upon the dead ! ").

[2] Of July 13, 1921.

native knows the footways of his familiar town, and listen to the sound of shots as we would to human voices. Yet, just because triumphant Death is for ever facing us is the land become silent, and its crushed soul sending forth not even the elemental cry of anguish and despair. Physically that land has lived through never-to-be-forgotten years of civil strife, but spiritually it is worn-out, fettered, and extinct—a mere dumb Russia of tortures and executions.

Yet though the living may be dumb, it is not so with the dead. They are crying aloud to us from the ravine of Saratov, from the dungeons of Kharkov and Khuban, and from the " camp of death " at Kholmogory.

For never can the dead be put to silence !

THE END

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